

LITTLE WOMEN

Written by

Sarah Y. Mason

&

Victor Heerman

SHOOTING SCRIPT (1933)

Based on
"Little Women"

By

Louisa May Alcott

Copyright © Turner Entertainment Co.
Reproduced by permission of Warner Bros. Consumer Products, a
Division of Time Warner Entertainment Company, L.P.

Also published in Four-Star Scripts, Noble,
Lorraine, New York, NY, Garland, 1936

1 EXT. CONCORD STREET (CIVIL WAR PERIOD). SNOWY, LATE AFTERNOON

Shop windows have displays of Christmas toys and shoppers on the street are laden with Christmas packages.

A parade of Civil War soldiers is marching through the street. The crowd cheering and waving at them.

LAP DISSOLVE:

2 EXT. STREET 2

Snow is falling over the sign in front of the store which reads:

UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION CONCORD DIVISION

LAP DISSOLVE:

3 EXT. STREET 3

People continue to cheer and the orchestra is heard playing as little children run after the marching soldiers.

4 INT. WORKROOM OF CHRISTIAN COMMISSION 4

CAMERA PANS around getting in the varied atmosphere of what was an old warehouse perhaps, which has been turned into this war relief center. Here supplies are collected to be sent to Central headquarters, to be requisitioned to field, fortress, hospital and relief points. The good ladies, rich and poor, are busily cutting out and sewing flannel jackets, woolen shirts, and knitting socks, while at other tables bandages are being made from old sheets and pillow-cases which are torn and rolled into convenient size for various uses. At other tables food supplies and other contributions which have been collected are being assorted, checked and packed into boxes and baskets for shipment. In still another corner a little group of poverty-stricken dependents upon the benevolence dispensed by this organization, now that their men are away fighting, are patiently waiting their turn to receive the necessities for which they have come. While their ragged children play around or try to warm their feet which are almost on the ground, at the old stove, the pinched mothers huddled into their insufficient shawls, exchange with each other news of their men, contained in the last letters they have had from the front. It is an indistinguishable medley of sound.

The CAMERA in its PANNING reaches Mrs. March, who has just finished giving instructions to a shabby old gentleman, about how to get his train, and is putting into his trembling old hands a railroad ticket.

MARMEE

So, you're going to Washington?

OLD MAN

Yes, ma'am. My son is sick in a hospital there.

MARMEE

This will be an anxious Christmas for you.

(she picks up a coat from a shelf and helps him into it as she continues)

I think this one will do. Let's try this.Is it your only son?

OLD MAN

No, ma'am. I had four, but two were killed and one is a prisoner.

MARMEE

You've done a great deal for your country, sir.

OLD MAN

Oh, not a mite more than I ought, ma'am. I'd go myself if I was any use. Thank you for the overcoat.

He starts to go. Marmee detains him.

MARMEE

Wait.

(she opens her purse, takes some money from it and puts it into the old man's hand)

I hope you find him better.

OLD MAN

(almost overcome)

Thank you, ma'am. God bless you. Merry Christmas...Merry Christmas.

(MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
 (he backs himself away
 smiling bravely at her
 through the half-frozen
 rheum in the old eyes,
 his hand to his hat in
 formal courtesy)

MARMEE
 (looking after him
 thoughtfully, tears in
 her eyes)
 Merry Christmas.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 Oh, Mrs. March, will you sign this
 so I can get it off?

The woman comes into the scene and looks at Marmee, surprised
 at her sadness.

WOMAN
 Why, what's the matter?

MARMEE
 When I see things like that poor
 old man, it makes me ashamed to
 think how little I can do.

WOMAN
 But, my dear, you're doing all you
 can here, and your husband is
 there.

MARMEE
 (sad)
 Yes, I know, but his last son is
 lying ill...miles away...waiting to
 say goodbye to him forever perhaps,
 while I have my four girls to
 comfort me.

WOMAN
 And a real comfort they are, too,
 aren't they?

MARMEE
 I couldn't bear it without them.
 (starts to sign the
 woman's book)
 Meg and Jo are working, you know.

WOMAN
 Yes.

MARMEE

Meg is a nursery governess.

WOMAN

Oh.

LAP DISSOLVE:

5 INT. KING HOME

5

Meg in hat and coat is taking leave of her charges, the three King children.

MEG

Merry Christmas.

MARYLYN

Merry Christmas.

MEG

Remember, Lily, Santa Claus is watching you.

MARYLYN

Come on, Tony, let's go to the blackboard.

LAP DISSOLVE:

INT. AUNT MARCH'S PARLOR - DAY

Aunt March is dozing in her chair, the parrot on his stand nearby, Mop, the dog, in her lap. Jo is reading aloud.

JO

We know as well what are the baneful fruits of selfishness and self-indulgence. Bad habits take root with fearful rapidity even in the richest natures. They grow and ripen and bear their fruit like southern vines and weeds...

(a snore is heard from Aunt March. Jo looks up, she smiles. There is no pause in her reading, but she starts to rise softly)

...almost in a single day and night.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

(she tiptoes to the desk,
puts the book down and
starts to tiptoe out of
the room as she continues
the text from the book)

...Crush them, pluck them out
pitilessly from their very first
appearance, and do not weary of the
labor of plucking them out again
and again.

(now Jo is out of the room
and has run quickly up
the stairway)

PARROT

(shrieks)

Goodbye...goodbye!

Aunt March wakes with a start, sits upright.

AUNT MARCH

Hold your tongue, you disrespectful
old bird!...Go on, Josephine.

She looks at the chair where Jo has been sitting, sees it is
vacant, brushes the dog out of her lap and rises angrily.

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)

(goes to the door of the
hallway, calling)

Josephine!

There is no answer but Aunt March stops in the doorway
prepared to wait until Josephine appears.

6 INT. HALLWAY

6

Josephine cautiously comes down the stairs with her coat on.
Aunt March steps angrily out from the doorway.

AUNT MARCH

And where are you off to, Miss?

Jo, caught red handed is forced to resume meekness as she
steps forward to her aunt.

JO

(meekly)

Oh, I didn't think you'd mind. It
was nearly time and the girls said
they'd be home early so we could
rehearse my play for Christmas.

AUNT MARCH

(nodding grimly at such
ingratitude)

Never a thought about my
Christmas....Flying off without a
word of cheer or greeting for your
poor old aunt.

JO

Oh, I'm sorry, Aunt March. Merry
Christmas.

AUNT MARCH

(lifting the skirt of her
dress)

Merry Christmas.

(she takes from a pocket
in her petticoat some
envelopes which she hands
to Jo as she continues to
speak)

Here. . .it's a dollar for each.

(Jo hesitates)

Well, take them!

JO

(her eyes alight)

Thank you, aunty.

AUNT MARCH

Never mind thanking me. Just spend
it wisely. That's all I ask, though
it's more than I can expect when
you're so much like your
father...waltzing off to war and
letting other folks look out for
his family.

JO

(proudly, with spirit)

There's nobody looking out for us.
And we don't ask favors from
anybody...and I'm very proud of
father and you should be too.

AUNT MARCH

Highty-tighty...don't be
impertinent, Miss.

JO

I'm sorry, aunty.

AUNT MARCH

It isn't preachers that are going to win this war. It's fighters.

JO

Yes, aunty. Can I go?

AUNT MARCH

Well, go on.

(turns to go upstairs. An
afterthought)

Did you clean Polly's cage today?

JO

(putting on her hat)

Yes, aunty.

AUNT MARCH

Did you wash those tea cups and put them away carefully?

JO

Yes, aunty.

AUNT MARCH

Didn't break any?

JO

(holding herself in)

No, aunty.

AUNT MARCH

And how about the teaspoons?

JO

I polished them.

AUNT MARCH

Yes. Very well then.

(she runs her hands along
the stair railing as she
moves up the stairs,
discovers some dust)

Here, just a minute. Come back here.

Jo runs up the stairs to her aunt.

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)

(pointing to the dust on
the rail)

Look at this. You haven't dusted properly.

(MORE)

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)

I want this stair rail dusted and polished before you leave here.

She slaps Jo's hand smartly, marches upstairs and out of scene. Jo looks after her angrily, dusts the rail with her muff, then, looking around to be sure she isn't being observed, slides backward down the banister, jumps off to the floor at the foot of the banister and runs out the front door.

LAP DISSOLVE:

7 INT. DAVIS SCHOOL - DAY

7

Mr. Davis is leading his pupils in singing "Little Town of Bethlemen." The girls stand by their desks. They sing.

GIRLS & MR. DAVIS

(singing)

"While mortals sleep, the angels
keep Their watch of wondering love.

DAVIS

(speaking over the
singing)

Higher. .higher.

PUPILS

(singing)

Oh, morning stars, together
proclaim The Holy birth."

The singing continues as the CAMERA PANS over to reveal Amy standing in a corner holding a slate toward the class which reads:

I AM ASHAMED OF MYSELF.

The singing finishes.

ALL

"...And praises sing to God the
King And peace to men on earth."

DAVIS

Thank you very much, ladies. And
now I wish all a very Merry
Christmas.

GIRLS

Same to you, Mr. Davis. Goodbye.

MR. DAVIS
School is dismissed.

The girls run out, babbling to each other excitedly. Mr. Davis approaches Amy.

DAVIS
(nervously)
Amy March, you may close the door.

As Amy, humiliated, walks to the door and starts to close it we see the girls in the hallway at the other side, looking in curiously.

GIRL
(as door closes)
That'll teach her..

8 INT. HALLWAY

8

GIRL
(continuing)
...not to cut up didoes!

GIRL (CONT'D)
Just serves that stuck-up Amy March right.

GIRL (CONT'D)
What's he going to do to her?

9 INT. SCHOOLROOM

9

Davis is talking to Amy angrily and Amy is sobbing.

DAVIS
I can see there's nothing for me to do but stop by and show your mother how. .instead of doing your sums...you cover your slate with sketches.
(he starts to turn the slate over)

INSERT SLATE

ON THE SLATE IS A COMIC SKETCH OF DAVIS AND PRINTED UNDER IT THE CAPTION:

Young ladies, my eyes are upon you.

Off scene we hear Amy sobbing and Davis' voice:

DAVIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...most uncomplimentary sketches.

BACK TO SCENE

AMY
 (pleading with Davis)
 Oh, please, Mr. Davis. I'll never
 do it again, sir and she'd be so
 disappointed in me. Please. Please.

DAVIS
 (after a pause, relents)
 Well, I should hate to spoil her
 Christmas and for that reason
 alone, young lady, I shall overlook
 it.

AMY
 (a wave of gratitude)
 Oh, thank you, Mr. Davis.

DAVIS
 (cutting her off severely)
 You may go.

AMY
 (gratefully)
 Oh, thank you, Mr. Davis.

Davis exits from the scene, but Amy continues to thank him as she backs away to the door.

AMY (CONT'D)
 Thank you very much indeed. Thank
 you, sir.

She starts to open the door.

10

INT. HALLWAY

10

Amy comes out from the classroom, drying her eyes. The girls crowd around her.

GIRL
 Oh, what did he do?

GIRL (CONT'D)
 What did he say?

GIRL (CONT'D)
Oh, come on, tell us.

GIRL (CONT'D)
What happened?

Amy, hanging her apron on a hook and taking her hat from one of the other girls, speaks with lofty disdain.

AMY
I just said that if I ever told my mother the way he treated me, she'd take me out of his old school. She's never been reconciliated anyway, since my father lost his money, and she's had to suffer the degerradation of me being thrown with a lot of ill-mannered girls...
(murmur of resentment from some of the girls)
...who stick their noses into refined people's business!

She sweeps away from them grandly. The girls look after her angrily and at each other.

LAP DISSOLVE:

11 INT. MARCH LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

11

Beth is seated at the piano playing and singing "Bloom Tiny Violet." She is having difficulty with the old keys which stick.

BETH
(singing)
"Yet a short while longer thou'll
be fairer still Soon...
(she hits a key that
doesn't give forth any
sound, taps it a few
times, continuing to sing
and play)
I'll make...."

INSERT CLOSEUP AT PEDALS

THREE LITTLE KITTENS THAT HAVE HOPPED OUT OF THEIR BASKET ARE INTRIGUED BY BETH'S FOOT WHICH GOES UP AND DOWN ON THE PEDAL.

BETH (CONT'D)
 (singing off scene)
 ...a present for my...

BACK TO BETH AT PIANO

BETH (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 ...sister dear.
 (she has trouble with the
 same soundless piano key)
 ...Bloom my tiny...

She looks down, sees the kittens out of their basket, stops playing, gets them back into the basket with a pretty scolding finger to stay there.

Hannah comes in with tea things.

BETH (CONT'D)
 Oh, Hannah, is it tea time?

HANNAH
 Yes.

BETH
 (going toward the table)
 I'll set the table.

HANNAH
 (giving her the things
 gratefully)
 Thank you, Beth. It'll be a help to
 me 'cause my bread's riz.

On her way out of the room Hannah stops and looks through the window. Snow is falling.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
 The girls are getting home early.

BETH
 (walking toward the
 window)
 Are they coming?

HANNAH
 Just passing the Laurence house.

12 EXT. LAURENCE MANSION - DAY - SNOW

12

Meg, Jo and Amy coming home. Jo slides and falls into the snow.

JO
Christopher Columbus!

MEG
(laughing)
Jo, don't use such dreadful expressions.
(she sees a horse-drawn buggy coming out of the Laurence driveway)
And here comes old Mr. Laurence.
What if he should hear you?

JO
I don't care. I like good strong words that mean something.

They are forced to stop short to let Mr. Laurence drive the horse and buggy out of his driveway. Before he is close enough to hear:

JO (CONT'D)
Oh, bother now. We're going to have to speak to him.

Mr. Laurence is driving, his driver seated in the back seat. The old gentleman is furred to the ears and cringing from the snow as he gives salute as the buggy dashes past.

LAURIE
How do.

AMY
(looking after the buggy)
It makes my knees chatter just to look at him.

The girls start walking on.

JO
I feel sorry for that poor boy, shut up all alone with such an ogre for a grandfather.
(looks toward the Laurence house and sees something)
Oh, look - there he is.

AMY
 (excitedly -- looking in
 the wrong place)
 Where?

Jo points.

CLOSE SHOT - UPSTAIRS WINDOW IN LAURENCE MANSION

LAURIE IN THE WINDOW CAUGHT LOOKING, HASTILY STEPS BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

BACK TO TRUCKING SHOT - JO, MEG AND AMY

MEG
 Don't point. He'll think you're waving at him.

JO
 He's gone anyhow. But what if he does?
 (looks back, waves her arms and calls loudly)
 Hey - hey!

MEG
 (horrified)
 Jo!
 (pulling at Amy)
 Come along, Amy.

Meg and Amy walk out of scene. CAMERA STAYS on Jo as, laughingly, she looks back up at the window. Her expression suddenly changes at what she sees.

13 EXT. UPSTAIRS WINDOW 13

Laurie, back in view in the window, is grinning and waving.

LAURIE
 Hey - hey!

14 EXT. DRIVEWAY 14

Jo, horrified that she has been caught, picks up her skirts, turns and runs, CAMERA FOLLOWING her.

LAURIE (O.S.)
 Hey.

She jumps over the gate, making a shortcut to her house, Laurie's voice still heard calling after her indistinctly. As she runs up to the door, Amy and Meg start up the back.

15

INT. MARCH HALL

15

Beth has the door open, standing a little behind it to miss the cold blast. There is a smile on her face for Jo who comes in on the run with a big hug and laugh.

BETH

Jo!

JO

How's my Beth?

Amy and Meg come in right behind her.

AMY

Jo just did the most dreadful thing.

MEG

Marmee home yet?

BETH

(as she closes the door)

Not yet, sweet.

The girls ad lib indistinctly as they remove their wraps. Jo, standing at the foot of the stairs, holds up the Aunt March envelope.

JO

(handing the envelopes to Beth)

Beth. . .Merry Christmas from Aunt March.

BETH

(looking into it at the dollar, delighted)

For me.

JO

(throwing her arms around Beth)

Yes, darling, for you.

AMY

We got one too.

MEG

(as they start into living
room)

What are you going to do with it,
dear?

BETH

I don't know. Marmee said we ought
not to spend anything for pleasure
when our men are suffering so in
the army.

By this time the CAMERA has trucked in front of the girls to
the fireplace where Jo is fastening on her apron.

JO

A dollar couldn't do the army much
good so I'm going to buy Undine and
Sintram. I've wanted it long
enough.

MEG

I'm sure Marmee would approve if
I got some new gloves. I've darned
my old ones until I can hardly get
them on...

THE CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSER TO THE GIRLS AS THEY SIT DOWN IN
FRONT OF THE FIRE.

MEG (CONT'D)

...and she always says a real lady
is known by her neat gloves and
boots.

AMY

(decidedly)

I shall get a nice box of Faber's
drawing pencils. I really need
them.

BETH

Then I'd like to spend mine for
some new music, if you don't think
Marmee would mind.

JO

Let's each buy what we want and
have a little fun...I'm sure we
work hard enough.

MEG

(who has picked up some
stockings and is darning
them)

I know I do. It's not the work I
mind so much. It's having to tell
Flo King how pretty she looks in
things that I know would look as
well on me.

JO

Well, what would you do if you were
shut up all day with a fussy old
cross-patch who flies off the
handle every move you make.

AMY

Jo, don't use slang.
(virtuously)

Besides, don't forget she gave us
the dollar. And I'm sure neither of
you suffers as I do. You don't have
to go to that nasty old Davis
school with impertinent girls who
laugh at your dresses and label
your father because he isn't rich.

JO

(laughing)

Libel...libel! Don't say label as
if papa were a pickle bottle.

AMY

I know what I mean and you needn't
be statirical about it. It's proper
to use good words and improve your
vocabillary.

JO

(laughing and whistling to
herself, as though
impressed)

Whee---! Aren't we elegant?

AMY

(hotly)

Well, you'll certainly never be
thought so...with your slang and
manners.

JO

I hope not. I don't want to be
elegant.

AMY
You needn't whistle like a boy.

JO
That's why I do it.

She whistles a bar or two.

AMY
Oh, I detest rude unlady-like girls.

JO
(mimicking Amy)
And I hate affected niminy-piminy chits.

BETH
(sweetly)
Birds in their little nests agree!
(she smiles and her funny little voice causes both sharp faces to soften)

MEG
(elder-sisterly)
Really, you're both to blame. You're old enough now to leave off boyish tricks and behave better, Josephine. Now you are so tall and turn up your hair, you must remember you are almost a young lady.

JO
(hotly)
No, I'm not. And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it down till I'm a hundred.
(she takes the combs out of her hair and shakes it down)
Jo!

MEG
(shocked, to Amy)
As for you, Amy, your absurd words are as bad as Jo's slang. Your airs are funny now, but you'll grow up an affected little goose if you don't take care.

Beth rises from her chair and kneels by Meg as she talks.

BETH

Well, if Jo is a tom-boy, and Amy's a goose, what am I, please?

MEG

(as all smile toward Beth
in agreement)

You're a dear and nothing else.

JO

And we're...we're three ungrateful wretches who don't deserve you.

(picks up a script and
holds it up to them)

Oh, wait till I become a famous author and make my fortune... Then we'll all ride in fine carriages and dress like Flo King, snubbing Amy's friends and telling Aunt March to go to the dickens.

(as everybody laughs at
this ridiculous picture)

Come on, let's rehearse.

(turning over the pages of
her script)

We'll start with...the...oh, the fainting scene. You're as stiff as a poker in that, Amy.

AMY

(complainingly)

Well, I can't help it. I've never seen anyone faint, and I don't intend to make myself black and blue tumbling flat as you do.

JO

Oh, it's easy if you'll only watch me. Come on.

She takes Amy's hand and pulls her up.

AMY

(as they come across the
room)

Well, if I can drop gracefully,
I'll...

JO

Now, now, when I come in...you see the horrible look in my eyes and you shrink back trembling.

Jo gestures fiendishly. Amy tries to tremble but not very realistically. Jo looks at her in disgust.

JO (CONT'D)

Well, get into the mood...get into the mood...now, now... when I start toward you with wicked intentions.

(she looks at Amy threateningly; Amy doesn't react)

Oh, Amy, you...you...you.

(demonstrating)

you draw back in horror, covering your eyes with your hands...

(staggering and crying, acting with all her might)

Roderigo...Roderigo!...ooh...save me...save me.

The melodramatic scream and stagger is climaxed by a realistic dead faint that shakes the china and Meg from her seat in terror, and Beth, thinking she's surely killed herself this time; they almost faint themselves in reaction of relief as she springs to her feet rubbing her elbows.

JO (CONT'D)

There, you see. Now, it's easy.

(stepping off and starting to make an entrance)

Now here I come.

(Amy takes the pose with not much heart; Jo leaps in dramatically)

Ah-ha...

(twirling an imaginary mustache leering wickedly and advancing upon Amy, who tries to tremble and retreat)

AMY

Roderigo...Roderigo! Ooh...Save me.

Save me! Ooh!

(she whirls around looking for a place to fall)

Ooh!

Amy manages to get near the divan before she has to fall. She screams and falls on to the divan. Beth and Meg laugh and run to Amy. Jo crosses to her angrily, all talking excitedly at once.

BETH
Jo, you were marvelous.

MEG
That was lovely.

16 INT. HALL

16

Marmee is coming in the front door. She hears the girls talking and laughing and steps to the doorway.

MARMEE
Glad to find you so merry, my girls.

17 INT. LIVING ROOM

17

The girls look up and see their mother standing in the doorway. They run to her happily, hugging her and taking off her things.

MEG
Darling!

MARMEE
How is your cold, Meg?

MEG
Much better.

MARMEE
That's good. Kiss me, baby.
(to Jo who has removed her coat)
Thank you, Jo. Thank you, dear. You look tired to death, Jo.

JO
No, Marmee, I'm not tired.

BETH
(running up)
Your slippers are all ready now.

MARMEE
(appreciatively)
Oh, that's my Bethy dearie.

She starts to sit down. Beth changes her mother's slippers and Amy stands by the chair.

MEG

Did you have a hard day, Marmee?

MARMEE

No, I had a very pleasant day,
dear, but it's good to be home.

(she takes a letter from
her pocket)

I have a treat for you.

BETH

A letter from father?

Joyous ad libs from the other girls.

JO

Three cheers for father.

THE CAMERA MOVES CLOSER TO THE TABLEAU OF MARMEE READING THE LETTER TO THE GIRLS. SHE FINDS THE PLACE SHE WANTS. THE GIRLS LISTEN LOVINGLY.

MARMEE

(reading)

'Give them all my dear love and a
kiss. Tell them I know they will
remember all I said to them, that
they will be loving children to
you, will do their duty faithfully,
fight their bosom enemies bravely
and conquer themselves so
beautifully that when I come back
to them I may be fonder and prouder
than ever of my...little women!

LAP DISSOLVE:

18 INT. LIVING ROOM - FEW MINUTES LATER

18

The girls are still gathered around Marmee. Beth kneeling with her head in Marmee's lap.

AMY

(with tears in her eyes)

I'm a selfish girl, but I'll truly
try to be better and not waste my
time in school, so that father
mayn't be disappointed in me.

JO

(tears running down her
cheeks)

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

I'll try and be what he loves to call me, "a little woman" and not be rough and wild, and do my duty here at home instead of always wanting to go to the war and help father.

MEG

(remorsefully)

And I'm not going to be envious any more if I can help it.

Marmee kisses Meg who also has tears in her eyes. She folds up the letter with tender care.

MARMEE

Now, we'll save the rest till after tea, for it's such a lovely long letter.

(rises)

I know everybody must be hungry.

Marmee leaves the room but the girls continue to stare, each thinking of her bosom sin with repentant remorse.

BETH

(low voiced)

Let's get something for Marmee with our dollar instead of for ourselves, shall we?

JO

(seizing upon the idea)

That's like you, Beth.

(eagerly to the others)

What shall we get?

MEG

(looking at her hands)

I'll get her a nice pair of gloves.

JO

New slippers. Best to be had.

BETH

Some handkerchiefs, all hemmed.

AMY

A beautiful little bottle of cologne. She'll like that, and it won't cost much, and then I'll have some left over for my pencils.

DISSOLVE:

19 INT. MARCH LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

19

Marmee and the girls are sitting around the fire sewing on a big sheet.

JO
(excitedly)
I've finished with Asia.

BETH
And here is Europe.

AMY
Three more stitches and you can have Africa.

MARMEE
Not too long stitches, dear.

MEG
If you'll pass me the scissors,
I'll give you America.

MARMEE
There...you see you did finish it after all. And you wanted to put it off until tomorrow.

BETH
Aw, but we never should have if Jo hadn't made a game of it, and thought of talking of the different countries as we worked.

MARMEE
It was a nice idea, Jo. Do you remember how you used to play Pilgrim's Progress when you were little things?

JO
I can see us all now with your rag-bags tied on our backs for burdens.

MARMEE
You have real burdens now, instead of rag-bags, according to what I heard before tea...except Beth. She didn't say, maybe she hasn't any.

BETH
Yes, I have. Mine is dishes and dusters and being afraid of people, and envying girls with nice pianos.

JO
A piano is a burden.

Beth goes to the piano and the others gather around for the evening "sing" as Beth plays. They all join in singing "Abide With Me."

ALL
(singing)
Abide with me Fast falls the
eventide The darkness deepens Lord
with me abide. When other helpers
fail And comforts flee Help of the
helpless Oh, abide with me.

At the end of the song Marmee kisses Meg good night.

MARMEE
Good night, my precious.

MEG
Good night, Marmee.

Marmee embraces the other girls in turn.

MARMEE
Good night, Jo my girl.

JO
Good night, Marmee.

AMY
Good night, Marmee.

MARMEE
Good night, my baby.

Beth who has extinguished the candles on the piano, goes to Marmee who has now sat down at the big table and picked up her darning.

BETH
Good night, Marmee.

MARMEE
Good night, Bethy.

As Beth turns out of the room and Marmee starts her darning

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

20 INT. MARCH DINING ROOM -- MORNING

20

Hannah, slightly more festive than usual because it is Christmas morning, is setting the table in front of a crackling fire. Meg, Jo and Beth run down the stairs in the background carrying packages. They come into the dining room cautiously and start putting their gifts at Marmee's place at the head of the table.

JO
Merry Christmas, Hannah.

MEG AND BETH
(together)
Merry Christmas, Hannah.

HANNAH
Merry Christmas.

JO
Where's Marmee?

HANNAH
She just went down the street, but she'll be right back. She wants you to have your breakfast when I can get it dished up.

They hear a door open and close and think it is Marmee coming in.

JO
(excitedly to the girls)
Come around here quick.

They all stand in front of the table to hide the presents and face the door expectantly smiling, but it is Amy who comes in through the doorway instead of Marmee. Their faces fall. Amy hides something behind her and looks a little abashed.

JO (CONT'D)
Where have you been, Amy?

MEG
What have you been doing?

AMY
(rather shamefacedly)
Don't laugh, Jo... I...

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

I only changed the little bottle of cologne...

(holds the bottle out for them to see)

...for a big one. I gave all my money to get it.

BETH

(warmly)

Amy!

MEG

(taking Amy in her arms)

Darling, that was unselfish of you.

JO

You're some pumpkins, Amy.

(she sits at the table)

As Amy answers Beth runs to the window to get her finest rose to decorate Amy's bottle.

AMY

(taking off her coat)

I felt ashamed, thinking only of myself.

Beth returns the cologne bottle to her, ornamented by the rose.

BETH

Amy, my prettiest rose.

AMY

And I'm so glad, because mine is the handsomest now.

(puts the bottle with the other gifts at Marmee's place)

Where is Marmee?

JO

She'll be back any minute.

Hannah has come in with a covered dish. Jo lifts the lid with eyes popping.

JO (CONT'D)

Breakfast!...Oh, sausages!

AMY

(excited)

Sausages!

Beth comes in from the kitchen with another dish.

BETH
And popovers!

JO
And coffee! Oh, Hannah, you beat
the Dutch.

HANNAH
(pretending to be cross)
You needn't make such a fuss about
it. I can remember when I used to
serve it on your father's table
every day.

JO
No!

AMY
Oh, Hannah, were we really that
rich? Tell me, how was I dressed?
(with an air of returning
a snub)
I'd like to tell Jenny Snow all the
pretty clothes I used to wear.

JO
(crushingly)
I can tell her. Diapers.

AMY
(shocked)
Jo!

Beth and Meg laugh. Amy's propriety is offended, while Jo has excitedly uncovered the dish again, sniffing appreciatively and counting with her finger.

JO
Two for each of us.

Meg looks out the window.

MEG
She's coming. . .she's coming.

JO
(wildly)
Here, Beth, strike up. Amy, open
the door. Come here, Meg, and we'll
cover these up and hide them.

Meg and Jo take their positions in front of the table. Beth sits down at the piano and starts to play "Turkish March" as Amy goes into the hall.

21 INT. HALLWAY 21

Amy opens the door for Marmee to enter. The march is heard from the other room.

AMY
Enter, Marmee.

She takes Marmee's arm and leads her into the dining room.

22 INT. DINING ROOM 22

As Marmee comes in the doorway, the music stops and the girls greet her happily.

JO AND MEG
Merry Christmas, Marmee.

MARMEE
Merry Christmas, my....

She stops short as Jo and Meg bow revealing her gifts on the table. Marmee, moved, crosses and picks up Meg's gloves.

MARMEE (CONT'D)
Oh, darling...Oh, Meg dear.
(she embraces and thanks
each one as she picks up
their gifts)
...Thank you, and handkerchiefs
from Beth....thank you.
(picks up the bottle of
cologne)
Oh, Hannah, did you see this. Oh,
Amy, my precious thank you.

JO
(holding up the slippers)
These are from me.

MARMEE
Oh, Jo. . .Jo, my girl!
(she hugs Jo)
Oh, thank you, darling. Thank you.
(looks at them all fondly)
Oh, my girls...I can't tell you how
happy I am.

(MORE)

MARMEE (CONT'D)
 (her eyes fill with happy
 tears, trying to hug them
 all at once)

JO
 (who always gets brusque
 when sentiment begins)
 Well, I can tell you how hungry I
 am. Come on, everybody. Pass me
 those plates.

Everybody starts to draw up chairs.

MEG
 Sit here, Marmee. Marmee's
 expression changes.

MARMEE
 Wait a minute, girls.
 (she hates what she has to
 do in the face of their
 enthusiasm of the coming
 treat)
 They all stop short, realizing from
 her tone that something is up.

MARMEE (CONT'D)
 I want to say one word before we
 begin. I've just come from a poor
 woman with a little newborn baby
 and six children huddled into one
 bed to keep from freezing, for they
 have no fire. They are suffering
 cold and hunger. My girls, will you
 give them your breakfast as a
 Christmas present?

This is a bombshell for a moment. But only a moment.

JO
 (breaking the silence
 impetuously)
 I'm so glad you came back before we
 started.

MARMEE
 (joyously)
 I knew you would.

BETH
 (eagerly)
 May I help carry the things,
 Marmee?

MARMEE

We shall all go.
 (handing the coffee pot to
 Hannah)
 Take the coffee, Hannah.

JO

I'll get some firewood.

Hannah and Jo leave the room and the other girls start to pack up the food from the table.

MEG

I'll take the cream.

BETH

I'll take the bread.

AMY

(picking up the platter of
 popovers and looking at
 them longingly)
 I'll take the popovers.

LAP DISSOLVE:

23

INT. MRS. HUMMELL'S ROOM - DAY

23

This is a bare miserable room with broken windows and no fire. Mrs. Hummell is lying on the bed with her wailing baby under some ragged bed clothes. Her small children are wrapped in ragged blankets and seated at a table. The door opens and Marmee and the girls come in laden with hot food and wood.

MARMEE

Here we are, Mrs. Hummell.

MRS. HUMMELL

(crying for joy)
 Oh, Gott in Himmel! Goot angels
 come to us.

JO

(laughing)
 Funny angels with goods and
 mittens.

Everybody pitches to. Hannah puts wood on the fire. Jo lights the paper and it blazes and catches. The other girls start helping the children to food, all talking at once indistinctly. Beth takes the baby and sits down, starting to feed it milk.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.INSERT HAND MADE PROGRAM

March

Dining Room Theatre Orchard House,

Concord, Mass.

Dec. 25th, 1864

One Extraordinary Performance Only
of

MISS JOSEPHINE MARCH'S

Most Hair-raising yet Melodious Operatic Tragedy

THE WITCH'S CURSE

With scenery, elegant costumes and lighting effects
Surpassing any Performance ever given in this theatre

STAGED BY JOSEPHINE MARCH

With the following distinguished cast

Black Hugo	Miss Josephine March
Roderigo	
Princess Zara	Miss Amy March
Mona, the Hag	Miss Margaret March
Lady-in-waiting	Miss Elizabeth March
Announcer	

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Scenery	Miss Amy March
Director of Music	Miss Elizabeth March
Costumes by	Miss Margaret March
Stage Manager	Miss Josephine March
Properties	Hannah

COMING

"THE GREAT SLAVE"

or

"CONSTANTINE THE AVENGER"

LAP DISSOLVE:

24 INT. MARCH LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

24

Shooting over the heads of the audience (Mrs. March and girl friends of the March sisters) toward portieres in the back of the room which part, disclosing an improvised stage.

On the stage is the exterior of the castle with a tower in the midst of a gloomy wood. Amy, as the Princess Zara, holds a note in her hand and is here evidently for an assignation. There is music playing.

AMY

Strange that Roderigo is not here.
 (referring to note)
 His note says promptly on the hour
 (she hesitates)

JO (O.S.)

(prompting)
 And why...

AMY

...and why Black Hugo's castle for
 the tryst? Oh... I'm afraid.

There is a knock off scene.

CLOSE SHOT JO

Jo is in the villainous outfit of Hugo. She is watching Amy's performance anxiously.

AMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Who comes here?

BACK TO SCENE

As Amy uncovers her face and looks up, Beth and Meg come on to the stage; Meg dressed as an old witch and Beth, her lady-in-waiting, frightened.

BETH

Oh, your Highness 'Tis Mona, the
 hag.

MED. SHOT JO

She creates the sound of hoofbeats by beating the bottom of a pan lightly with sticks.

MEG (O.S.)

Black Hugo hat betrayed thee.

MED. SHOT AUDIENCE

They watch breathlessly.

AMY (O.S.)
I must fly!

JO (O.S.)
Whoah...

MED. SHOT JO

JO (CONT'D)
...whoah!
(she throws down the sticks, laughs fiendishly, puts on her moustache and hat as she continues her lines)
...Zara will be waiting. My proud beauty...Zara will be mine...Black Hugo approaches.
(still laughing fiendishly, she crosses and exits through the curtains on to the stage)

SHOT OF STAGE OVER HEADS OF AUDIENCE

Jo marches on to the stage. Beth and Meg spring in front of Amy who cringes.

JO (CONT'D)
Withered crone...begone!

Jo laughs and goes to Amy as Beth and Meg leave the scene. She is twirling her moustache and leering as she advances upon Amy who retreats trembling as in the rehearsal.

AMY
(calling for help)
Roderigo...Roderigo...Roderigo.
(as Jo closes in)
...Save me!...Save me!

Jo snorts in disgust. Amy whirls around and does the faint very badly, falling on to the bench.

AMY (CONT'D)
(as she falls)
Oooh...

Jo is disappointed in Amy's performance but immediately steps back into character, snaps her fingers and throws her cloak around her shoulders.

JO
 (striding up to Amy and
 lifting up the
 unconscious swooner)
 And now to carry out my fell
 designs.
 (she staggers off with
 Amy)

25 BACK STAGE

25

Meg and Beth are watching as Jo drags Amy out and drops her
 disgustedly.

JO
 (angrily)
 What a faint!

AMY
 Well, I told you I wasn't going to
 make myself...

JO
 (starting to whip off her
 moustache)
 Ssh!

Beth and Meg help Amy to climb precariously on top some
 furniture so her face can reach the stage window.

26 INT. LIVING ROOM AND STAGE

26

Curtains part again revealing Amy's face at window on the
 stage.

AMY
 (pleading with the unseen
 Hugo)
 Have pity...oh, have pity! Bring
 not upon me the worst of shame!

JO (O.S.)
 Silence...else you'll rue the day
 you spurned Black Hugo's love.

27 BACK STAGE

27

Jo continues her lines as Beth helps her change her costume.

JO
 Make thyself ready for the wedding.
 I shall return within the quarter.

BACK TO AMY AT STAGE WINDOW

AMY
 Oh, me...oh, heaven protect the
 helpless.

28 BACK STAGE 28

Jo throws cloak around her shoulders. By this time she is transferred into Roderigo. She walks onto stage.

29 INT. LIVING ROOM AND STAGE 29

JO
 (Roderigo going to Amy at
 stage window)
 Zara...my beloved!

AMY
 Roderigo, durst I believe my eyes?

Jo kneels by the window and serenades her sweetheart, Amy, accompanying herself on the guitar as she sings "Pale Stars are Twinkling."

JO
 (singing)
 "The pale stars are twinkling The
 fair moon is rising above..."

MED. SHOT AUDIENCE WATCHING

JO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 ...My guitar is tinkling...

30 STAGE 30

Jo finishes singing.

JO
 (singing)
 ...But the notes are not Sweet Till
 they bring me my love."

Marmee and the girls applaud. Jo bows to Amy.

JO (CONT'D)
 Courage, my fair.
 (she hands her guitar to a
 hand that stretches in
 back stage from between
 the curtains and at the
 same time takes a rope
 ladder from the same
 source)
 ...The good Padre waits at yonder
 gate with the horses. See the
 ladder. All is arranged.
 (throws the ladder up to
 the window)
 Liberty! Fly with me, my love...fly
 with me, my love. I will assist
 you. I will...

At this point she starts to climb up the ladder but it is too much for the flimsy scenery. The improvised wall falls down on Jo exposing the furniture on which Amy is standing. Amy and chair and all fall on top of Jo in great confusion.

FULL SHOT LIVING ROOM

Marmee and the girls rise horrified and run to the rescue.

JO (CONT'D)
 (heartbroken)
 It's all right, everyone. stay
 where you are.
 (she starts to rise,
 lifting the scenery up
 with her)
 The girls are all talking excitedly
 and there is a pandemonium of arms
 and legs. They start to laugh and
 help each other to rise.

MED. SHOT - HANNAH AT DOORWAY

Hannah stands in the doorway into the dining room beyond which we see a banquet spread on the table.

HANNAH
 Young ladies, will you all please
 come in for supper?

The girls look at each other surprised, then start rushing toward the dining room.

31 INT. DINING ROOM

31

The table looks very festive. The girls troop in excited and amazed.

JO
 (looking at the ice cream
 in center of table)
 Christopher Columbus...what's this?

AMY
 (staring)
 Is it fairies?

BETH
 It's Santa Claus.

MEG
 Mother did it.

JO
 Aunt March had a good fit and sent
 it.

MARMEE
 (enjoying the situation,
 shakes her head as she
 starts to serve)
 All wrong. Mr. Laurence sent it.

Exclamations of delighted surprise.

JO
 (amazed)
 No!

GIRL
 Who is Mr. Laurence?

JO
 The Laurence boy's grandfather. He
 lives next door.

MARMEE
 (as she passes plates
 around)
 He heard what you did with your
 breakfast and sent me a nice note
 this afternoon saying he hoped I
 would allow him to express his
 friendly feeling toward my children
 by sending them a few trifles in
 honor of the day.

The girls are now eating with enjoyment.

JO

The boy put it into his head, I know he did. He looks like a capital fellow and I'm dying to get acquainted. I'm going to, too.
(reaches for piece of cake)

BETH

I wish father were here. I'm afraid he isn't having such a merry Christmas as we are.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

32 EXT. MARCH AND LAURENCE HOMES - DAY - SNOW ON THE GROUND 32

Jo, in rubber boots and bundled up for the snow, is putting the finishing touches to a snowman. There are a broom and shovel nearby with which she has cleared the path.

She makes a snowball to throw at the snowman, then thinks of Laurie, changes her mind and looking upward, throws it at his window. The soft snowball hits Laurie's upstairs window pane squarely and splashes.

Jo is looking up, delighted at her good marksmanship.

Laurie appears at his window, opens it. His face lights up at sight of Jo.

LAURIE

(laughing and calling
down)

Hello.

JO

(calling back)

How do you do. I wanted to thank you. We did have such a good time over your nice Christmas present.

(notices that Laurie is
holding a jacket tightly
across his chest)

What's the matter? Are you sick?

LAURIE

Just a little cold, but grandfather's made me stop indoors for a week.

JO

Oh, that's too bad Can't anybody come to see you?

LAURIE

(hopefully)

If they would.

JO

(laughing)

Wait, I'll ask Marmee.

(as she starts off with a
wave)

Close the window now.

Laurie closes the window as Jo, shouldering broom and shovel, marches off to her house. Laurie's expression shows he hopes her mother will let her come.

LAP DISSOLVE:

33 EXT. ENTRANCE TO LAURENCE HOUSE 33

Jo stands at the doorway. She has a basket hung on her arm and in her hands a covered dish. She rings the bell and in a moment the door is opened by the butler. We see Laurie running down the stairs in the hall in the background.

34 INT. HALL - JO AND LAURIE STANDING IN DOORWAY 34

LAURIE
(delighted)
How do you do, Miss March.

JO
(handing him the covered
dish)
How do you do, Mr. Laurence. Mother was so sorry to hear that you'd been ill. My sister, Meg, sent some of her blanc mange. It's soft, you know, and will slide down easily without hurting your throat.

LAURIE
(taking it)
Thank you.

JO
(indicating basket)
And Beth lent you these till you're well.

Laurie uncovers the basket, revealing Beth's three meowing kittens. The unexpectedness of it causes him to laugh.

JO (CONT'D)
Oh, I know boys don't like kittens, but she was so anxious I couldn't refuse.

LAURIE
(taking the kittens)
Maybe they'll liven things up. It's dull as tombs over here. Won't you come in?

JO
 (secretly longing to)
 Oh, no, no. I'm not to stay.

LAURIE
 (disappointed)
 Oh, please. Just for a few moment.
 I've ordered tea.

JO
 (giving in)
 Oh.

She follows Laurie into the hallway and crosses to the living room, taking in the grandeur of her surroundings. She takes off her coat and puts it down as she exclaims:

JO (CONT'D)
 Christopher Columbus! What
 richness! Oh...
 (seeing the solarium off
 the room, full of blooms)
 Oh...it's just like summer!
 (she turns back to Laurie
 at the tea table)
 Oh, it's marvelous...so roomy.

TWO SHOT OF TEA TABLE

Jo is thrilled.

LAURIE
 (pouring tea)
 How many, please?

JO
 Two, please...three. Laurie puts
 the sugar in her tea.

JO (CONT'D)
 (trying to be elegant)
 And how do you like it here after
 living in Europe so long, Mr.
 Laurence? I'm going to Europe.

LAURIE
 Really? When?

JO
 Oh, I don't know. You see, my Aunt
 March has rheumatism and the doctor
 thought the baths...

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

(helps herself to a
frosted cake)

Oh, not that she hasn't a bath. She has a very nice one... did you take any baths while you were there?

(Laurie looks at her
surprised)

...I mean for rheumatism.

LAURIE

No, no I. . .I'm not troubled with rheumatism.

JO

Nope, neither am I. But you see I thought baths wouldn't do me any harm. . .I mean, that is to say, while I was there...

(helps herself to another
cake)

...You see, I've always wanted to go to Europe...not for the baths, of course...but for my writing. You see, Aunt March...oh, you don't know Aunt March, do you? Oh, well, never mind. What were you saying, Mr. Laurence?

Laurie laughs and they start to sit down in front of the fireplace.

LAURIE

I'm not Mr. Laurence. I'm only Laurie.

JO

Well, Laurie, well...how do you like it here after Europe?

LAURIE

Well, it's strange after living in schools all my life, but it will be all right when I get used to grandfather. You know, he...

JO

Oh, yes, but you should have seen him before you came.

LAURIE

(laughing)

Isn't he a holy terror?

JO
(laughing)
You ought to see my Aunt March.

Laurie uncovers the blanc mange.

LAURIE
Oh, it's too pretty to eat. I wish
we had things like this over here.

JO
(looking at the cake in
her hands)
And I wish...
(stopping short, elegantly
transferring her look to
the blanc mange)
It is nice, isn't it? My little
sister put on the geranium leaves.
She's very artistic.

LAURIE
Amy?

JO
(surprised)
Yes...how did you know?

LAURIE
(caught up)
Why, I often hear you calling to
one another, and when I'm alone
over here and...
(beginning over, frankly
but apologetically)
I...I beg your pardon for being so
rude but sometimes you forget to
put down the curtains and when the
lamps are lighted it's like looking
at a picture to see you all around
the table with your mother. You
always seem to be having such good
times.

JO
(after a pause; gently)
We'll never draw that curtain any
more, and I give you leave to look
as much as you like. I wish instead
of just peeping you'd come over and
see us. We'd have jolly times
together.

LAURIE
 (eagerly)
 And would you let me be in a play?
 (a little apologetic
 confession)
 I saw some of it the other night.

JO
 Oh, that was terrible. I want to
 put on Hamlet and do the fencing
 scene.

LAURIE
 (excitedly)
 I could play Loertes. I took
 fencing lessons at the Academy.

JO
 (delightedly)
 Really?

LAURIE
 Yes, look...

He springs to his feet to show her, picks up the coal tongs
 and makes a few lunges.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 Look...En garde!

JO
 (appreciatively)
 Splendid.

LAURIE
 (handing the coal tongs to
 Jo)
 Here.

Jo rises without hesitation.

JO
 Oh, come for the third, Loertes.
 You but dally.

Laurie picks up a shovel from the fireplace and they have a
 little duel, laughing and stabbing.

LAURIE
 Say you so. Come on.

JO
 Another hit...what say you!

LAURIE

A touch...a touch...I do confess.

35 INT. HALL

35

Mr. Laurence, Laurie's grandfather, comes in to the hall. He hears the commotion and laughter from the other room.

MR. LAURENCE

What is this?

Mr. Brooke, Laurie's tutor, attracted by the unusual commotion runs down the stairs alone.

MR. LAURENCE (CONT'D)

(to Brooke)

What on earth. . .what's going on here?

BROOKE

I don't know, sir.

They cross and look into the room where they see Laurie and Jo fencing and laughing.

36 INT. LIVING ROOM

36

LAURIE

Have at you now.

He maneuvers Jo a few steps backward. She trips and falls over the rug.

JO

Oh...

Laurie rushes to her frightened.

LAURIE

Oh, I say...
(helps her up)
Are you hurt?

JO

Oh, no.

BACK TO MR. LAURENCE AND BROOKE

LOOKING AT EACH OTHER SURPRISED.

JO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
No, nothing ever hurts me.

LAURIE (O.S.)
I'm sorry.

BACK TO LAURIE AND JO

LAURIE (CONT'D)
I forgot you were a girl and I'm
afraid I got a bit too rough.

JO
(flaring at him)
What are you talking about? I had
you bettered if I hadn't slipped.

Laurie laughs. Jo tries to tidy her hair, spies the picture
of Mr. Laurence over the fireplace.

JO (CONT'D)
That's a good picture of your
grandfather. He looks pretty grim,
but I shouldn't be afraid of him,
though I can see how his face might
frighten some people.

TWO SHOT - BROOKE AND MR. LAURENCE

Mr. Laurence listens angrily. Brooke who has been laughing,
pulls himself together and decides to take himself away.

BROOKE
I'll wait upstairs, sir.

Mr. Laurence, with determination, starts into the living
room.

BACK TO LAURIE AND JO

Mr. Laurence comes into the room, unobserved, as Jo
continues:

JO
His eyes are kind and I like him
even though he does bark at you so.

MR. LAURENCE
Thank you, ma'am...

Jo and Laurie turn, Laurie frightened. Mr. Laurence continues sternly:

MR. LAURENCE (CONT'D)
So you're not afraid of me, eh?

JO
(knees and teeth
chattering)
No sir...not much.

MR. LAURENCE
But my face would frighten some people.

JO
(trying to make it better)
Oh, I only said "might."

MR. LAURENCE
And I bark, do I?

JO
(weakly)
Oh, no, sir...perhaps not all the time.

MR. LAURENCE
(his fierce eyes
twinkling)
But with all that you like me, eh?

JO
Oh, yes, sir, I do...I do...I do.

MR. LAURENCE
(smiles and holds out his
hand)
And I like you.

Jo smiles in relief and she shakes hands with him while Laurie looks on delightedly.

LAURIE
(almost shouting for joy)
Oh, and grandfather, you should see her fence.
(to Jo)
Come on and let's show him.

JO
Oh, no. I've been here too long now.

LAURIE

Oh, I'll see you home.

He starts to follow Jo toward the doorway but Mr. Laurence stops him.

MR. LAURENCE

No, no, no. You'll stay indoors, young man. I shall see Miss March home.

(Laurie and Jo are delighted and amazed; to Jo:)

I want to pay my respects to your mother and thank her for the medicine she sent my boy. It's done him lots of good.

(offers his arm to Jo which she takes, dazed; as they start off Mr.

Laurence calls back humorously to Laurie)

...And you get upstairs and do your sums. Brooke is waiting for you.

(pretending a bark)

And see that you behave yourself like a gentleman, sir.

All three laugh. Jo looks back waving goodbye to Laurie in triumph. Laurie is delighted at her complete conquest and calls after her:

LAURIE

Goodbye, Jo.

As he waves

FADE OUT:

FADE IN

37 INT. HALL MARCH HOME - NIGHT

37

Hannah is coming down the stairs and talking excitedly to Marmee who stands at the foot of the stairs looking up.

HANNAH

Here they come. Here they come. All dressed up and looking as pretty as pictures.

Marmee watches with pride as her pretty flock comes down the stairs. Amy is the first. She pirouettes to show off her costume.

MARMEE

Oh, Amy, how dainty. You look lovely.

Beth clings to her mother when it comes her turn to be inspected. Hannah is fixing Amy's coat collar.

BETH

Oh, Marmee, I wish Laurie hadn't asked me to his party. I know I shall be frightened.

MARMEE

(with a soothing pat)
You wouldn't want to hurt his feelings when he's been so kind.
(turning Meg around to inspect her dress)
Oh, Meg the dress is lovely.

MEG

Thank you, Marmee.

Jo now comes running down the stairs noisily.

MARMEE

Jo, you look splendid.

JO

Well, I feel perfectly miserable with nineteen hairpins all sticking straight into my head, but, dear me, let us be elegant or die.

MARMEE

Does the patch show much? Jo turns around to present her rear.

MEG

Well, it does a little, Marmee, but she's going to sit down or else stand with her back against the wall.

(noticing Jo's hands)

Jo, where are your gloves?

JO

(carelessly, getting into her wraps)

They're all stained so I'm going without.

MEG

(putting down her foot)

You wear gloves or I don't go.

Hannah brings forth Jo's gloves, holds them out wearily.

HANNAH

I tried to clean them, but it only made them look worse.

JO

(grabbing them to end the argument)

Oh, here, I'll carry them and hold them crumpled up in one hand. Nobody will ever see them.

MEG

(horrified)

Jo.

JO

Well, I'll tell you. We'll each wear one of your nice ones and carry my bad ones, and then the effect will be fine and easy.

MEG

(reluctantly, taking off one of her gloves)

All right, only be careful of it, and don't stretch it.

JO

(exchanging gloves)

No.

MEG

And Jo dear, do behave nicely and don't put your hands behind your back.

Jo looks annoyed.

MEG (CONT'D)

(turning to her mother)
Good night, Marmee.

MARMEE

Good night, my dear.

AMY

(to Jo)
And above everything, don't say "Christopher Columbus" and disgrace us all.

JO

Oh, hold your tongue, you baby.
(Marmee kisses her on the cheek)
I'll be as prim as I can and not get into any scrapes if I can help it.

As Marmee embraces the other girls and they all start out

LAP DISSOLVE:

38

INT. DRAWING ROOM - LAURENCE MANSION - NIGHT

38

The very elegant party is at its height. Pretty girls, handsome young men are dancing to the music of the stringed orchestra from the conservatory playing "Jenny Lind Polka." Some guests are seated, grouped along the wall.

Jo is standing all by herself in a doorway watching the couples dancing on the floor, looking quite out of it. Laurie dances by the doorway and smiles at Jo. She forces a smile trying to convey she is having a lovely time.

CAMERA FOLLOWS her as she walks a little aside. Meg dances by with Brooke, looks sternly and significantly at Jo who is holding her hands behind her back. Jo quickly brings her hands in front of her and walks farther on into the hallway to the foot of the stairs. She leans against the stair rail and sways in rhythm to the music. A young man comes up to her.

YOUNG MAN

May I engage you for this dance,
Miss March?

JO

No, thank you. I'm not dancing.
(she curtsies)

As he goes off she looks about wretchedly, longing to get off somewhere by herself since she can't dance. She runs into the hall.

STAIR LANDING

Beth and Amy come into the scene and sit on the steps on the landing, craning their necks to see the dancing couples in the ballroom below.

AMY

(pointing)
There's Kitty Vaughn.

BETH

Where?

AMY

There in the pink dress and blue sash. I don't see why she's allowed with the grown-ups when I have to stay up here.

BETH

(sighing)
Oh, that beautiful piano. It's as big as our kitchen.

During this Mr. Laurence in full evening dress has been descending from the upper hall. He approaches the girls.

MR. LAURENCE

(gruffly jocular)
Well, what's this?
(the girls jump, startled,
and rise respectfully)
Why aren't you young ladies
downstairs dancing?

AMY

(speaking for the gasping
Beth)
Mother said we weren't to go down
with the grown-ups.

MR. LAURENCE

But can you see anything from here?
(to the embarrassed Beth)
How about you?

AMY

(trying to cover up for
her sister)
She just likes to listen to the
music.

MR. LAURENCE

(with a big gesture as
though to sweep them both
down with him)
You just come down with me where
it's playing.

BETH

(in terror)
Oh, no, no, please...I...

MR. LAURENCE

Why not?...
(backs away a couple of
steps)
Why, my dear child, what's the
matter?

Amy pulls at his sleeve as he turns around. She whispers to him dramatically as he bends toward her.

AMY

She has an infirmity. She's shy.

MR. LAURENCE

(concealing his amusement)
Oh, I see.

AMY

(beginning to be at her
ease)
If it weren't for that, she'd be
simply fastidious, because she
plays beautifully.

MR. LAURENCE

Oh, she must come and play for me
some time.

AMY

(shakes her head)
She never would do that.

MR. LAURENCE

Oh, it wasn't that I wanted to hear her...

(a little louder so that
Beth will be sure to
hear; carelessly)

...But that piano down there is simply going to ruin for want of use. I was hoping one of you young ladies would come and practice on it just to keep it in tune, you know. But if you don't care to come, never mind.

Beth has been listening to this and is clasping her hands tightly together to keep from clapping them in ecstasy.

She speaks as Mr. Laurence starts downstairs.

BETH

Sir, we do care...oh, very, very much.

Amy is as much surprised as Beth herself and her unheard of temerity.

MR. LAURENCE

(gently)

Oh, so you're the musical lady.

BETH

(her breath knocked out of
her)

I'm Beth. I love it dearly and I'll come if you're quite sure nobody will hear me and be disturbed.

MR. LAURENCE

(carelessly)

Not a soul, my dear...not a soul.

(to brush away her thanks,
as he starts down,
chucking Amy under the
chin)

You come, too, young lady, and tell your mother I think all her daughters are simply fastidious.

Chuckling to himself he exits past the camera, leaving the two girls hugging each other ecstatically.

AMY

Oh, Beth, isn't he elegant?

39

INT. BALLROOM

39

Laurie makes his way through the guests looking around for someone, CAMERA FOLLOWING him. He sees Jo and crosses to her.

LAURIE

This is the German, and I'll be hanged if I'll let you refuse me all of them.

JO

(shakes her head with determined politeness)
Oh, no, no.

LAURIE

(wondering what's got into her)
Don't you like to dance?

JO

(starting eagerly)
Oh, yes, I love to dance, but I...well, I can't...I...I mean I promised I wouldn't.

LAURIE

(amazed)
Why?

JO

(giving up)
Oh, well, I may as well tell you.
(she pulls him down closer to her)
You won't tell?

LAURIE

Silence to the death!

JO

Well, you see, I have a bad trick of standing in front of the fire and I scorch my frock and I burned this one.

LAURIE

Where?

Not wishing to get up and display it, Jo shifts a little pointing. Laurie smiles.

JO
 Oh, you can laugh if you want to.
 It is funny.

They both laugh.

LAURIE
 Well, I tell you how we can dance.
 There's no one in the hall. We
 could dance out there without being
 seen.

Jo is delighted. She nods sparkling eyed. Laurie offers her his arm and CAMERA FOLLOWS them as they cross into the hallway.

40 INT. HALLWAY 40

Laurie and Jo come out laughing together over the ordeal of having gotten out safely without anyone seeing Jo's patch. They start a lively dance.

JO
 (as they dance)
 You're a trump.

LAURIE
 And I think you're just perfectly
 splendid.

CLOSE SHOT - AMY AND BETH ON STAIRWAY

They watch Jo and Laurie delightedly.

41 INT. HALL - JO AND LAURIE DANCE 41

Beth and Amy on stairway in background. As the music stops and they stop dancing!

LAURIE
 That was capital!

Beth and Amy applaud and Jo and Laurie look up and see them.

JO
 Oh, hello.

LAURIE
 (gaily)
 What are you doing up there?...
 Come on down.

JO
No, they can't.

LAURIE
(laughs and understands,
calls up to the girls
again)
Have you had refreshments?

BETH
No, but we really don't care for
any...

Amy pinches her and Beth let's out a little scream.

LAURIE
(laughing)
We'll bring some right up.
(to Jo)
Come on.

They go toward the refreshment room.

42 INT. CONSERVATORY - TWO SHOT - MEG AND BROOKE SEATED TOGETHER

They are getting along very well, obviously in the midst of a conversation that has gone on for a long time.

MEG
Then when Laurie goes to college,
what becomes of you?

BROOKE
Oh, I shall turn soldier as soon as
he is off. I am needed.

MEG
Oh. . .oh, I'm so sorry.
(blushing as he looks at
her eagerly)
I mean, I'm so sorry for all the
mothers and sisters who have to
stay home and worry.

BROOKE
(disappointed but still
striving)
I have neither and very few friends
to care whether I live or die.

MEG
 (warmly)
 Laurie and his grandfather would
 care a great deal and we...we all
 should be very sorry if any harm
 came to you.

BROOKE
 (happily)
 Would you?

43 INT. STAIRWAY

43

Laurie and Jo come back carrying refreshments for the girls.

JO
 (calling gaily)
 Here we come.

In Jo's exuberance she trips and falls on the stairs,
 spilling the plate of refreshments in her lap and soiling
 Meg's glove.

LAURIE
 Oh, Jo!

JO
 (as she gets up)
 Oh, oh!.... Oh, look at me.
 (she examines the glove
 ruefully)

LAURIE
 It's a shame.

JO
 What a blunderbuss I am!

LAP DISSOLVE:

44 MEG AND BROOKE

44

Seated where we left them last.

MEG
 (shyly)
 I'll ask Marmee.

Laurie rushes in and up to them.

LAURIE

Oh...have you two been hiding? I've been looking all over the house for you...

(Brooke and Meg have both risen at Laurie's approach)

Hannah is here.

MEG

(flustered)

Oh, is it that late?

LAURIE

Well, time slips away, you know.

(with a kidding look to Brooke who gets a little dignified)

MEG

Good night, Mr. Brooke.

BROOKE

Good night, Miss Margaret.

He looks after her as she goes out on Laurie's arm, sees she has dropped her glove, picks it up and starts forward.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Margaret!

(but instead of following her with the glove, he looks around to see that he isn't observed and looks at the glove tenderly and thrusts it into his pocket)

45

EXT. ENTRANCE TO LAURENCE HOME

45

The girls are leaving with Hannah and Laurie is standing in the doorway seeing them out.

LAURIE

Goodbye, Bethie. I'm glad you came.

AMY

We had an elegant time.

LAURIE

Good night, Amy.

(to Jo)

Good night.

Jo starts to give him her hand, sees Meg's glove all spotted. She and Laurie laugh, thinking of her mishap on the stairs.

JO
(covering her face)
Oooh.

LAURIE
Good night again.

MEG
Good night, Laurie.

LAURIE
(kidding)
Good night, Miss Margaret.

MEG
(laughing and reproving)
Laurie!

They all have started down the steps. Jo calls back:

JO
Don't forget to bring your ice
skates tomorrow.

LAURIE
(happily)
I won't. Good night.

JO
Good night.

CAMERA STAYS on Laurie at the door, his eyes shining, looking after them as long as he can see them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

46 INT. GARRET OF MARCH HOME - DAY IN SPRING

46

Jo, her dress covered by an old pinafore upon which she wipes her pen at will, is reading her manuscript for the last time, pushing her cap askew now and then and looking upward to the beams. She finished reading it.

JO

There, I've done my best. If this won't suit I'll have to wait until I can do better.

She springs to her feet, removes her cap and apron and folds the manuscript as we

LAP DISSOLVE:

47 EXT. MARCH WINDOW

47

Jo is climbing out of the window. She spots a safe place to descend and, throwing her manuscript down so she'll have both hands free, CAMERA FOLLOWING her down the trellis to the ground. She is picking the manuscript up and brushing it off carefully when the kitchen door opens and Beth, with a secretive attitude, comes out and, seeing Jo, quickly hides something behind her.

JO

Why, what are you up to?

Beth reluctantly brings forth a pair of slippers.

BETH

It's a pair of slippers I worked for Mr. Laurence. He's been so kind about letting me play on his beautiful piano. I didn't know any other way to thank him, Jo.

(anxiously, as Jo inspects the slippers)

Do you think they're all right?

JO

(suppressing a desire to laugh at the homemade slippers)

They're beautiful, and I think you're sweet.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)
 (with a shock, recognizing
 the ribbon strung through
 and tied in lady like
 bows)
 Hey, is that Amy's hair ribbon?

BETH
 Yes. . .yes, but I think she was
 going to throw it away.

JO
 (open-eyed)
 You think!
 (then with an affectionate
 shove)
 You'd better vamoose before she
 catches you.

Beth runs off and Jo looks after her smiling, then turns and with a look at her manuscript, starts determinedly on her own mysterious mission.

LAP DISSOLVE:

48 EXT. PUBLISHING HOUSE BUILDING - DAY

48

Jo is being ushered out of the door. She looks happy and excited as she runs down the steps looking at a small piece of paper she holds in her hand. Laurie has been waiting to waylay her on the sidewalk in front of the building. He runs up to her and snatches the piece of paper out of her hand. It is a check.

LAURIE
 Now I'll find out why you've been
 coming down to this hole every day
 and never have any time for me any
 more.

Jo makes an angry grab for the check. Laurie holds it out of her reach.

JO
 Laurie Laurence, give that to me,
 or I'll never speak to you again.

LAURIE
 (giving in)
 All right, take it.

He gives the check back to Jo and they start to walk down the street CAMERA FOLLOWING THEM.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Huh. You're a fine one. I thought we weren't to have any secrets from each other.

JO

Well, this is altogether different. Yes?

LAURIE

(woman coming from the opposite direction bumps into them)

Oh...

WOMAN

I beg your pardon.

Laurie and Jo walk on.

LAURIE

(angrily)

Oh, of course it's different. Just like a girl. Can't keep an agreement.

This makes Jo sore.

JO

Oh, bilge.

She stalks ahead faster, head high, while Laurie follows after her not bothering to get out of anybody's way.

LAP DISSOLVE:

49

EXT. WOODED PATH - COUNTRY - DAY

49

CAMERA FOLLOWS Jo and Laurie who are walking through the woods. Jo is reduced now to angry silence and Laurie is trying to pique her into a conversation.

LAURIE

You'll be sorry, for I was going to tell you something very plummy...a secret...all about people you know, and such fun.

JO

(intrigued)

Oh, what?

LAURIE
 (as they stop)
 If I tell you, you must tell me
 yours.

JO
 (after a moment, ready to
 bargain)
 You won't say anything about it at
 home, will you?

LAURIE
 Not a word.

JO
 And you won't tease me about it in
 private?

LAURIE
 I never tease. Fire away.

She hands back the check to Laurie as he unfolds it and looks
 at it:

INSERT

THE CHECK IN LAURIE'S HAND READS "PAY TO MISS JOSEPHINE MARCH
 \$1.50." AS LAURIE'S HAND TURNS THE CHECK WE SEE WRITTEN ON
 THE BACK OF IT: "IN FULL PAYMENT FOR STORY ENTITLED 'THE
 PHANTOM HAND.' "

BACK TO SCENE

Jo is smiling as she watches Laurie look at the check.

JO
 I sold my story to the "Spread
 Eagle."

LAURIE
 (picks Jo up and whirls
 her around shouting)
 Hurray for Miss March...Hurray for
 Miss March!
 (puts Jo down)

JO
 (quieting him down)
 I don't want anybody to know about
 it till it's out.

LAURIE
 Won't it be fun to see it in print?

JO
 (nodding excitedly, then
 remembering)
 Now, what's yours?

LAURIE
 (as they start to walk on)
 Well, I know where Meg's glove is.

JO
 Oh, is that all?

LAURIE
 (expressively)
 Wait till I tell you where it is.

JO
 Where?

LAURIE
 Pocket.

JO
 All this time?

LAURIE
 (nodding, his eyes
 dancing)
 Isn't it romantic?

JO
 (disgusted)
 Romantic...rubbish. I never heard
 of anything so horrid. Of all the
 sickly sentimental...
 (she leans up against a
 tree)
 Oh, why is it that things always
 have to change just when they are
 so perfect? Meg used to always tell
 me everything, and now she...
 ...she keeps everything to herself,
 and she thinks brown eyes are
 beautiful...and John is a lovely
 name.
 (more angrily)
 He better keep away from me or I'll
 tell him what I think of him,
 trying to break up other people's
 happiness...

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)
 (she has taken a few angry
 steps as she spoke: now
 sits down on a fallen
 log)
 ...and spoil all their fun.

LAURIE
 (sitting down beside her)
 It doesn't spoil any fun. It makes
 it twice as good. You'll find out
 when someone falls in love with
 you...soft summer day...
 (looking around him for
 inspiration)
 ...sun setting through the trees.
 (illustrating, starting to
 put his arms around her)
 ...your lover's arms stealing
 around you...

JO
 (rises angrily)
 I'd like to see anybody try it.

LAURIE
 (rising)
 Would you?
 (he tries to take her in
 his arms)

Outraged, Jo gives him a push that sends him falling back
 over the log.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 (as he stumbles)
 Oooh...

He recovers himself and starts after Jo who is trying to run
 away from him.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 Be careful...I'll get you.

JO
 (half laughing, half
 angry)
 You can't catch me.

LAURIE
 I will catch you.

JO
 Oh, no you won't.

LAURIE
I'm gaining on you.

JO
(running faster)
Oh, you couldn't catch me in a
million years.

Laurie stumbles and falls again.

JO (CONT'D)
(laughing, calling back)
I thought you said you could run.

LAURIE
(resuming the chase)
I'll get you.

The fallen tree is in Jo's way and halts her progress. Laurie catches up with her.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Now I have got you.

JO
Oh, oh.
(she slips away again)

Now they have reached the front of the March home. Jo jumps over a fence and runs up to the gate, Laurie still in pursuit. Meg and Brooke are standing at the gate. They look up, amazed.

JO (CONT'D)
(yelling at them as they
run up to the gate)
Look out, look out. Let me in...let
me in...let me in.

GROUP SHOT AT GATE

Jo whirls through the gate, closes it, turns around and puts her foot against it to keep Laurie from opening it. She is laughing and gasping in triumph.

BROOKE
Hey, look out, Laurie, don't act
like that.

JO
I'm sorry, Meg.

LAURIE

I would have beaten her, though, if I hadn't tripped and fallen.

JO

(trying to tidy her streaming hair and putting on her hat excitedly)

You should have seen...

(she stops short looking off at Brooke and Meg, disapproving of their intimate attitude)

TWO SHOT BROOKE AND MEG

BROOKE

It's been a most enjoyable afternoon, Miss Margaret.

MEG

Thank you. Paying visits has never been quite so much fun before.

BROOKE

I hope we may do it again very soon.

GROUP SHOT AT GATE

JO

Goodbye, Mr. Brooke. Come along, Meg.

Meg and Brooke look at her surprised at her near rudeness. Meg turns back to Brooke and shakes hands with him.

MEG

Good afternoon, Mr. Brooke.

BROOKE

Good afternoon, Miss Margaret.

MEG

(entering the gate which Jo is holding open for her; to Laurie)

Good afternoon.

LAURIE
 Goodbye, Margaret.
 (looks at Brooke
 significantly)

BROOKE
 Goodbye, Jo. Come along, Laurie.

LAURIE
 Right.
 (calling to Jo)
 See you tomorrow, Jo.

The boys leave. Jo slams the gate, and the girls start walking up the walk.

TWO SHOT - MEG AND JO

MEG
 (angrily)
 I have never been so embarrassed in
 my life.
 (with dignity)
 When will you stop your childish
 romping ways?

JO
 Not until I'm old and stiff and
 have to use a crutch.

Meg departs up the path to the house with dignity. Jo looks after her forlornly. She sees the old Meg vanishing and all her fun and happy times...

BETH (O.S.)
 Jo!

Jo turns quickly brushing away her tears and greets Beth who is coming up the path with her market basket full.

JO
 Hello, Bethie! How's my girl?

50 INT. MARCH HALLWAY

50

Meg and Amy and Hannah are there, and all is excitement and confusion. Jo and Beth come into the hall and look amazed at the others who are beckoning them mysteriously toward the living room.

JO
 What is it?

The others draw them into the living room.

51 INT. LIVING ROOM

51

In the foreground is a beautiful little grand piano. Beth looks at it unbelievably.

JO
Christopher Columbus!

The girls jump around in exuberance.

BETH
(touching the piano case)
For me?

JO
(understanding)
Oh, the old gentleman!

HANNAH
Ain't it the prettiest baby piano
you ever seen?

AMY
(thrusting a note into
Beth's nerveless hands)
Look, this came with it. Quick,
read it. See what it says.

Jo takes the note from Beth's hands because Beth doesn't seem able to move.

JO
I'll read it...
(opens the note)
Miss Elizabeth March...Dear
Madam...

MEG
(interrupting)
Oh, how grand, Amy.

AMY
Isn't that elegant?

Beth only stands and stares at the piano, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

JO
(continues reading the
note; rapidly with
excitement)
(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

I have had many pairs of slippers in my life, but none that suited me as well as yours. I like to pay my debts, so I know you will allow me to send you something which belonged to the little granddaughter I lost. . .With hearty thanks and best wishes I remain your grateful friend and humble servant, James Laurence.

(she hugs Beth rapturously)

Oh, Bethie. . .Isn't he a really sweet old man?

The girls inspect the piano and exclaim simultaneously.

AMY

Look at the lovely brackets.

JO

Look, it opens, it opens, it opens, it opens. . . .

AMY

(to Beth)

You will have to thank him.

BETH

(in a rush, breathlessly)

I will go right now.

Almost before the others know it, Beth is out of the room, her market basket still on her arm. The girls watch after her, then stare at each other.

HANNAH

Well, I wish I may die. She would never have gone in her right mind.

LAP DISSOLVE:

52

INT. DRAWING ROOM OF LAURENCE HOUSE

52

Mr. Laurence is sitting with his paper. There is the sound of the front door opening and closing, and in a moment Beth appears in the doorway to the living room. She knocks. Mr. Laurence looks up.

MR. LAURENCE

Come in.

Beth, her color going and coming, puts her basket down and timidly marches straight to Mr. Laurence.

BETH

(with only a small quaver
in her voice)

I...I came to thank you, Sir.

But suddenly forgetting her speech and only remembering that he lost the little girl he loved, she impulsively leans over and kisses Mr. Laurence on the cheek.

Mr. Laurence likes it amazingly, and he sits down with Beth on his knee. He lays his wrinkled cheek against her fresh young one while she cuddles up as if Mr. Laurence were Marmee, her fear completely conquered in her gratitude and love.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

53

EXT. GARDEN - MARCH HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

53

A happy, peaceful scene of Marmee and her girls in the garden. Jo is reading aloud to the others. Amy is sketching at an easel.

JO

(reading)

The dog and the man at first were
friends But when this piece began
The dog to gain some private ends
Went mad and bit the man Around
from all the neighboring streets
The wondering neighbors ran And
swore the dog had lost his wits To
bite so good a man

(Amy takes her sketch off
to have Marmee admire
it.)

The wound did seem both sore and
sad To every Christian eye And
while they swore the dog was mad

AMY

(showing Marmee her
sketch)

Look, Marmee!

At this moment Hannah runs into the scene very excited. She holds a telegram in her hand.

HANNAH

Mis March, Mis March, it's one of
them telegraph things, Ma'am.

The girls gather around anxiously as Marmee takes the telegram and opens it.

MARMEE

(looking from the wire as
from a blow)

It's Father.

MEG

Oh, Marmee.

MARMEE

He's in the hospital. I must go to
Washington at once.

LAP DISSOLVE:

54 INT. MARCH LIVING ROOM

54

Marmee with her bonnet on and her cloak nearby is pacing up and down anxiously. Beth and Amy are putting the last things in Marmee's bag.

MARMEE

(indicating)

Put those things in the corner,
dear...

(she starts to cross to
the window anxiously)

What on earth is keeping Jo?

Meg comes into the room with another bag.

MEG

This is packed, Marmee. I don't
believe I have forgotten anything.

MARMEE

Thank you, dear.

(turns back to the girls)

Now, girls, while I'm away, don't
forget the Hummells.

AMY

We won't.

MEG

We'll do our best, Marmee.

Mr. Laurence and Brooke come into the room. Mr. Laurence is carrying two bottles of wine and a dressing case.

Brooke carries his top coat and hat.

MR. LAURENCE

(as they enter)

Here we are. Here is some excellent
Port for your husband.

MARMEE

(gratefully taking the
bottles)

Thank you, thank you. How generous,
Mr. Laurence.

MR. LAURENCE

I hope you will find this dressing gown useful.

MARMEE

(taking the dressing gown)
Thank you, thank you.

MR. LAURENCE

Well, everything is arranged and Brooke will go with you.

MARMEE

There is no need. I will be all.

MR. LAURENCE

(overruling her)
Oh, he is prepared. He has some commissions for me in Washington, and he will be of help to you on the journey.

MARMEE

(warmly)
How thoughtful of you.

Brooke bows to Marmee and crosses to Meg.

55 TWO SHOT - MEG AND BROOKE

55

MEG

(looking up at him)
It is such a relief to know that Marmee will have someone to take care of her. Thank you very much.

BROOKE

Not at all, Miss Margaret.

56 TWO SHOT - MARMEE AND MR. LAURENCE

56

MARMEE

(overcome)
My kind friend, I can't thank you.

MR. LAURENCE

(pats her hand; to change the subject)
Well, Laurie's outside with the carriage. We'll wait for you. The train leaves in about an hour.

He picks up Marmee's bag and goes out with it, just as Hannah comes up to Marmee with a cup of tea.

HANNAH

Here, Mum, you'll need this.

MARMEE

(turning away at the sight)

Oh, I couldn't.

GIRLS

(crowding in)

Oh, please, Marmee. You must, Marmee. It'll quiet your nerves.

Marmee takes the tea and makes an effort to drink it. Her mind is still on Jo. She crosses again to the window and looks out.

Just at this moment Jo plunges into the room all out of breath. She has a queer expression on her face. The girls crowd around her.

MEG

Jo, where have you been?

AMY

Jo, what kept you so long?

She crosses to her mother and hands her some bills she has in her hand.

JO

Here's the money from Aunt March.

As Marmee opens her handbag and carefully puts Aunt March's money into it, Jo brings out another small roll of bills from her pocket and puts it on the table.

JO (CONT'D)

(trying to speak carelessly but with a little tremble in her voice)

And there is my contribution.

MARMEE

Twenty-five dollars!

(staring at the money, then at Jo)

Where did you get it, my dear...

JO

(quickly but trying to be
calm)

Oh, it's mine, honestly. I only
sold what belonged to me.

With a sweep she takes off her bonnet revealing that she has
had her hair closely cropped. She turns around, half
frightened at what her mother will say.

MARMEE

(shocked)

Your hair! Jo, you shouldn't have
done it.

General ad libs from the other girls of shocked amazement. Jo
strides about, brave and careless.

JO

Well, Aunt March croaked as she
always does when asked for nine
pins, and Marmee, she sent only
just money enough for the ticket.
. .and I knew you would need more,
and, oh, well, I happened to be
passing a barber shop and I saw
tails of hair hanging in the window
with the prices marked on them, and
I thought it would do my brains
good to have my mop cut off,
and...and so...I had...

(she falters and looks at
Marmee guiltily)

MARMEE

(deeply touched)

Thank you, dearie.

(she puts her arm around
her shorn sheep and
silences the others with
a look)

Laurie comes to the door in a
hurry.

LAURIE

Are you ready, Marmee? We'll have
to hurry to catch...

(he stops short as he sees
Jo's bobbed hair)

Christopher Columbus!

(he continues to stare at
her open-mouthed)

JO

Well, it's boyish, becoming and
easy to keep in order...
Marmee, you will miss that train.

MEG

Yes, Marmee, come on.

Everything forgotten now but Marmee's departure, she starts hurriedly gathering up her things, and the girls crowd around her.

MARMEE

Now girls, go on with your work as usual.

AMY

We will, Marmee.

MARMEE

(as they start toward the
hall)

Do everything that Hannah tells you to.

57

INT. HALL

57

Amy is crying as the girls follow their mother to the door. Laurie is bringing up the background with the luggage.

BETH

Oh, can't we go to the train with
you, Marmee?
(her voice catches)

MARMEE

No, no, I want you all to stay here
and comfort each other.
(she kisses and embraces
each girl one after the
other)
Meg, dear, watch over your
sisters...Be patient Jo, don't do
anything rash. Beth, dear, help all
you can.

BETH

Yes, Marmee.

MARMEE

Amy, be obedient.
 (as Meg takes hold of her
 arm and starts to go out
 of the door with her)
 No, no, I want you to stay here. I
 want to carry away a picture in my
 mind of my brave little women to
 take to Father.
 (one last embrace of all
 together)
 Goodbye, my darlings.

GIRLS

Goodbye, Marmee.

MARMEE

God bless you and keep us all.

And she is gone. THE CAMERA STAYS on the four girls framed in the doorway, all bracing themselves so that their mother's last picture of them may be a smiling one to cheer her on her journey. Suddenly as though in answer to a wave from her, all smile gallantly through glistening tears and wave back.

LAP DISSOLVE

58 INT. JO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

58

A shaft of moonlight from the window is the only light in the room. Jo is in bed crying softly but trying to stifle her sobs so she won't awaken Meg who is sleeping beside her.

MEG

Jo, you crying?

JO

(in a false whisper)
 No, no, I'm not.

MEG

(tenderly comforting her)
 Don't cry, dear. Father will be all
 right, and Mr. Brooke will take
 care of Marmee.

JO

I'm not crying because of that.

MEG

(surprised)
 What, then?

JO
My...hair...
(she sobs and, as Meg puts
her arm around her
comfortingly)

FADE OUT:

FADE IN.

59 INT. MARCH LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

59

Jo is lying on floor reading aloud to her sisters and Laurie. The girls have stopped their various pursuits and are listening enthralled. Jo is reading her story from the "Spread Eagle." Laurie's face is beaming with conscious pride, scarcely able to wait for her to finish and spring the secret of her authorship.

JO

(finishing rapidly)

Yet 'tis whispered that when the gondolas glide through those fatal waters, they still run crimson with the blood of Lady Viella and her gallant lover, slain by the phantom hand. The End.

(she looks up, flushed
with suppressed
excitement)

AMY

Oh, it gives me the shivers. I am pins and needles all over.

MEG

Oh, it was exciting and so sad. Who wrote it?

Jo hides her face in the paper unable to answer.

LAURIE

(his face an odd mixture
of solemnity and
excitement)

Your sister!

There is a moment, then all in a breath spring up as they grasp what Laurie has said.

MEG

Really, Jo?

AMY

(grabbing at the paper
excitedly)

Let me see. Let me see.

LAURIE

(smugly)

And I knew it all the time.

Jo is the laughing and excited center of the excited group.

AMY

Here it is. "By Miss Josephine March." Oh Jo, I can't believe it.

(she runs to Beth who is coming into the room.)

Beth looks a little sad)

Beth, Beth, Jo has written a story, and it's in the paper. Isn't that marvelous?

BETH

(disjointedly; she has been crying)

Really?

AMY

(putting her arm around Beth to show her the paper)

Look.

BETH

(pushing Amy away)

Don't come near me.

(she turns and runs out of the room)

AMY

(stares after her frightened)

Meg, Jo, something's wrong with Beth.

MEG

What is it?

AMY

I don't know.

JO

Where is she?

AMY

In Marmee's cupboard.
(she points)

They all run into the hallway.

LAURIE
 (as he runs after them)
 What's wrong?

60 INT. MARMEE'S CUPBOARD'S HALL 60

Jo is the first one to reach the cupboard door.

JO
 (calling)
 Darling, what is it?

61 INT. CUPBOARD 61

Beth is lying on the floor sobbing. Jo comes in.

JO
 Bethie, what is it? What's wrong,
 Bethie? What is it?
 (she sits down beside
 Beth, putting her arms
 around her in great
 concern, the others
 trying to crowd in)

BETH
 (crying)
 Oh Jo, the baby's dead.

JO
 What baby?

BETH
 Mrs. Hummell's. It died in my lap
 before she got back with the
 doctor, Jo.
 (she sobs on Jo's
 shoulder)

JO
 (comfortingly)
 Oh, now, now, there, there.

BETH
 The doctor said it was scarlet
 fever.

They all look at each other, shocked.

MEG
 Scarlet fever!

BETH
 You don't think I'll get it, do
 you, Jo?

JO
 (trying to be convincing)
 Oh, no, Bethie, of course you
 won't.

BETH
 But Amy must keep away because
 she's never had it. How does it
 start?...with sort of a headache
 and sore throat and a queer feeling
 all over.

JO
 I don't remember.

LAURIE
 Give me the doctor's book, will
 you?

Laurie exits.

MEG
 Jo, I think we had better get her
 to bed. Come along, Bethie.
 (she starts to help Beth
 out)
 Laurie comes back and hands the
 doctor's book to Jo.

JO
 (as she starts to look
 into it)
 I will find out what to do.

62 INT. HALLWAY

62

Laurie steps back to let Meg and Beth come out of the
 cupboard.

BETH
 I'll be all right, Meg.

JO
 (emerging from the closet
 and looking at the book)
 Oh, here it is.

Beth and Meg are now starting up the stairway. Hannah rushes
 in with Amy who has gone to call her.

HANNAH

Oh, this is terrible. Go get Dr. Bangs, will you, Mr. Laurence?

LAURIE

(starting out)
All right.

HANNAH

Tell him to come over as soon as he can.

LAURIE

Yes.
(he leaves)

Amy is starting up the stairs after Meg and Beth, but Hannah tries to stop her.

HANNAH

You stay down here, Amy. You're to go off to Aunt March's for a spell just in case.
(she starts up the stair)

AMY

(calling after her)
No, I won't, I won't. I'm going to stay right here with Beth.

JO

Oh, be quiet for once, Amy.
(she goes up the stair)

AMY

I won't be sent as though I were in the way.

LAURIE

(who has got his hat;
stopping a second by her)
I advise you to come, Amy. Scarlet fever is no joke, Miss.

AMY

(screwing up her face)
Well, I don't care.
(she sits down on the
board step. Laurie kneels
in front of her)
I'd rather get scarlet fever and die than go to Aunt March's.

LAURIE

(laughing a little,
putting one arm around
her)

Now, Amy, be a good girl. I'll pop
around there every day and tell you
how Beth is, and I'll tell you
what...every day I'll come and take
you out driving, huh?

AMY

(giving in)
Well, yes.

LAURIE

(starting to get up)
That's the girl.

63

INT. BETH AND AMY'S BEDROOM

63

Hannah and Meg are flying around preparing the bed for Beth,
as Jo is putting on Beth's nightgown.

JO

Oh, Bethie, if you should be really
ill, I'll never forgive myself.
I've let you go to the Hummells
every day when I should have gone.

MEG

(hovering around and
helping Beth into bed)
No, it's my fault. I'm the oldest
and I should have gone...I promised
Marmee I'd look after you.
(to Jo)
Don't you think we ought to
telegraph her?

HANNAH

No, we mustn't. The poor lady can't
leave your father, and it will only
make her more anxious.

BETH

(distressed)
Oh, please don't telegraph, Jo.
Hannah knows just what to do. I.
(feverishly)
I feel better already.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN.

64 INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

64

The doctor is attending Beth who lies motionless in the bed. Hannah, Jo and Meg are standing at the foot of the bed watching the doctor anxiously. He rises and paces the floor a bit. Jo comes toward him, but the doctor turns and speaks to Hannah.

DOCTOR

If Mrs. March can leave her husband, we'd better send for her.

Hannah and the two girls give muffled little reactions realizing the seriousness of this verdict. Meg and Jo clutch each other with a dreadful fear.

HANNAH

(crying)

The girls had the telegram already, but I wouldn't let them send it, and now...the poor lady...

(she stops, unable to go on)

JO

(in a low voice)

Oh, Mother, oh, Mother. What if she shouldn't get here in time?

65 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BETH'S DOOR

65

Laurie and his grandfather are stationed outside Beth's door waiting to hear the doctor's report. As the door of Beth's room opens and Jo comes out Mr. Laurence rises from the chair in which he has been sitting and Laurie turns sharply from the window. One sight of Jo's face, and they are afraid to ask. Jo is unable to speak. She lowers her head to hide her tears and walks slowly across to the attic playroom. Laurie and the grandfather exchange significant looks. Then Laurie softly follows after Jo

66 INT. ATTIC PLAYROOM

66

Jo comes in and sits down on the couch sobbing. Laurie follows her in and sits down beside her. For a moment he doesn't speak, then:

LAURIE

Oh, Jo, is it that bad?

JO

(brokenly; nodding)

She doesn't know me. She doesn't look like my Beth. How are we going to bear it? Mother and Father seem so far away.

LAURIE

(taking Jo's hand;
whispering)

I'm here. Hold on to me, Jo, dear.
(he gently strokes her
bent head while her tears
fall)

Poor Jo...oh, poor Jo...you're all worn out...what does the doctor say?

JO

He sent for Marmee.

(poignantly)

Oh, if she were only here.

LAURIE

She will be.

Jo thinks he means when Marmee gets the wire, and doesn't pay any particular attention; but Laurie suddenly speaks very fast and excitedly:

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Grandfather and I got fidgety and thought your mother ought to know. She would just never forgive us if Beth. . .well, if anything happened, so I telegraphed yesterday.

Jo sits up straight getting it for the first time.

JO

No?

LAURIE

(finishing all in one
breath)

She'll be here on the two o'clock train tonight, and I'm going to get her.

He doesn't get to say any more, for Jo flies at him, electrifying him by throwing her arms around his neck and kissing him.

JO
 (crying joyfully)
 Oh, Laurie...oh, Marmie!
 (laughing hysterically)
 Oh, I beg your pardon, but you are such a dear I couldn't help flying at you.

LAURIE
 Fly at me again. I rather like it.

JO
 Laurie, you're so silly.

LAURIE
 (rising)
 I'd better go.
 (starts across to the stairway; Jo goes with him)
 Well, to the railroad station and I shan't spare the horses.

JO
 (her face alight, laughing through her tears)
 Oh, bless you, Laurie, bless you.

He exits down the stairs. Jo looks after him a moment and kneels by the stair post.

JO (CONT'D)
 (half sobbing, half praying)
 If you really want Bethie...please wait until Marmee comes home...but, oh, God, please don't...because she's so...oh please don't...

LAP DISSOLVE:

67 INT. LIVING ROOM - MARCH HOME - NIGHT

67

Mr. Laurence is pacing back and forth, back and forth, keeping vigil, the CAMERA FOLLOWING him.

LAP DISSOLVE:

68 INT. UPPER HALL -MARCH HOME - NIGHT 68

The doctor is pacing up and down nervously in front of Beth's door. He looks at his watch; his face is grave.

LAP DISSOLVE:

69 INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT - RAINING 69

Jo is pacing up and down softly from window to Beth's bedside while Meg in an easy chair sits gazing at the still form of Beth who lies in what seems to be the sleep of approaching death. Hannah in a chair at the foot of bed has dropped off through sheer exhaustion. Jo, comes and sits on Meg's chair, looking desperately and helplessly at the beloved sister who is slipping away.

MEG

(the sound barely coming
from her white lips)
If God spares Beth, I'll love Him
and serve Him all my life.

JO

If life is as hard as this, I don't
see how we ever shall get through
it.

Beth stirs slightly in bed. Meg comes running to her. After a look, she falls on her knees at the bed, covering her head in her arms.

MEG

(frightened, calling)
Hannah...Hannah!

Jo looks up frightened.

HANNAH

(awakes; comes to bedside)
What is it? What is it?

Hannah takes one look at Beth and goes to call the doctor.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Dr. Bangs...Dr. Bangs!

The dreadful fear shoots through Jo that Beth is dead and Meg is afraid to tell her. She comes to the bed in an instant, not conscious of moving -- until she reaches the side of the bed. To her excited eyes a change seems to have taken place. The beloved face looks pale and peaceful -- and Jo kneeling, leans close, kisses the forehead with her heart on her lips.

JO
(whispering softly)
Goodbye, my Bethie...goodbye.

She buries her face in the bedcovers sobbing. The doctor and Hannah come in. He looks at Beth's eyes, feels her forehead.

DOCTOR
(his voice showing the
emotion of his relief)
The fever's turned. She's sleeping
naturally.

HANNAH
(hardly able to believe
it)
The Lord be praised.

Jo looks up and throws her arms around Hannah. Off scene we hear the sound of horses. Jo runs to the window, turns electrically.

JO
Marmee's here. She's come.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

70 DOWNSTAIRS HALL - MARCH HOME - DAY

70

Jo is carrying Beth downstairs, Marmee and Meg anxiously helping alongside, Amy carrying things.

AMY

Isn't it good to have Bethie well again?

They bear her lovingly to the window where the sofa is pulled up to it, they install her, everybody trying to do the most for her, cover her, put pillows more comfortably, open window, etc. They are all talking indistinctly.

MARMEE

It didn't tire you, did it, dear?

BETH

No, Marmee.

JO

And see the lovely flowers Mr. Laurence sent you.

BETH

(looking out of window,
sees two little birds on
sill)

Oh, and my birds...

(looking at Jo)

Oh, Jo, I've never been so happy.

LAURIE

(sticking head in door)

Begging your pardon, do the Marches live here?

The girls are all talking at once excitedly.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Wait till she sees what I brought for her.

He steps aside, and in the doorway stands Mr. March. The girls all rush to him, all talking excitedly.

GIRLS

Oh, father...dear father...is it really?

He is enveloped in loving arms -- trying to embrace everybody at once.

At the first look Beth has flung aside her robe and now excitedly is putting slippered feet to the floor; she rises, stands waveringly, crosses trembling towards her father.

MARMEE
(seeing Beth)
Bethie!

They all turn and look and as Beth meets her father's eyes, joy puts strength in the feeble limbs, and tottering a little, she runs straight across and into his arms as he meets her and catches her to his heart.

MARCH
Beth!

BETH
(sobbing)
Father!

The others, happy tears streaming, look at the meeting of these two they have so nearly lost. Mr. March picks Beth up to carry her to couch, the girls all talking at once indistinctly.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN

71 INT. LIVING ROOM - MARCH HOME - DAY

71

Jo is sitting in the window seat, brooding moodily over a book. Meg, not seeing her, breezes in in her best frock, her hair done its softest and most becoming, carrying some flowers and singing indistinctly. She puts the flowers down and looks out the window expectantly. She admires herself in the mirror, fixing her hair.

JO

(coldly)

Are you expecting someone?

MEG

(acting surprised)

Why, no. . . .what do you mean?

JO

(getting up and going to her, feeling like crying)

Meg...Meg, why can't we stay as we are? Do you have to go and fall in love and spoil all our peace and fun and happy times together? You're not like your old self a bit, and you're...you're getting so far away from me...

(coming around in front of her, an ache in her voice)

...Oh, Meg, don't don't go and marry that man.

MEG

(with dignity)

I don't intend to go and marry any man. And if your mean Mr. Brooke, he hasn't asked me if he should, I shall merely say quite calmly and decidedly, I'm sorry but I agree with mother that it's too soon.

JO

(grabbing her hand)

Oh, Meg...

(excitedly throwing her arms around her and whirling her around as she talks)

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)
 ...hurrah for you! Oh, you're a
 trump.

MEG
 My hair!

Meg sits down in a chair trying to rescue her hair. Jo kneels beside her, talking excitedly.

JO
 Then things will be as they used to
 be, and now that father's home,
 we'll...

She is interrupted by the sound of the doorbell. She runs to the window and looks out as Meg rises and adjusts her hair.

JO (CONT'D)
 (shaking her fist)
 I'll go. I'll get out of the way.
 Now don't forget. Oh, if I could
 only see his face when you tell
 him.

72 INT. HALLWAY

72

Meg comes to the door hurriedly, but pauses first and assumes an air of unconcern before she opens the door.

Mr. Brooke stands in the doorway and smiles rather shyly.

MEG
 (as though surprised)
 Why, Mr. Brooke.

BROOKE
 Good day, Miss Margaret.

MEG
 Won't you come in?
 (as he steps in she closes
 door)

BROOKE
 I came to get my umbrella. That is.
 . .that is. . .to see how your
 father finds himself, today.

MEG
 (confused too, takes
 umbrella from rack)
 Why, he's in the rack. I mean it's
 very well. I mean...

(MORE)

MEG (CONT'D)
I'll tell him you're here.
(she starts to go)

BROOKE
(stopping in front to
prevent)
Oh, please. . .
(as she looks at him
confusedly)
Are you afraid of me, Margaret?

MEG
(trying to be impersonal)
Why, how could I be? When you've
been so kind to father. I only wish
I could thank you for it.

BROOKE
You can. Shall I tell you how?

MEG
(faintly)
Oh, no. Please don't.
(she sits down)

BROOKE
I only want to know if you care for
me a little, Meg. I love you so
much, dear.

MEG
(trying to remember her
prop speech)
Thank you, John. I agree with
mother...it's too soon.

BROOKE
(kneeling by her chair)
I'll wait. I don't mind how long or
how hard I work, if I can only know
I'm to have my reward in the end.
Please give me a little hope.

MEG
I'm afraid I can't.

BROOKE
(hard hit)
Do you really mean that?

As he is trying to look into her eyes the front door opens
and Aunt March comes in, stops short at the scene before her.

AUNT MARCH
What's this?

Meg and Brooke both rise.

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)
(to Brooke)
Get along. Shoo shoo...shoo...

Meg tries to look dignified while Brooke, grave and pale, after this rejection, goes out the door.

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)
(sternly to her niece)
What's going on here? Who is that?

MEG
Mr. Brooke.

AUNT MARCH
Oh, the Laurence boy's tutor.
(scandalized)
Then it's true.

MEG
(in an agony)
Shush...he might hear you.
(looks out the window)
Ho's been so kind to father.

AUNT MARCH
Oh, he has. Well, he'll be much kinder if he goes about his business...

MEG
Sssh!

AUNT MARCH
(paying no attention)
...and leaves you alone.
(waving off Meg's violent gestures not to talk so loud)
I won't stop. I'm only thinking of your own good, Margaret. You should make a rich match so you can help your family. This Brooke person has no money, no position in life.

MEG
That doesn't mean he never will have.

AUNT MARCH

Oh, so he's counting on my money.
He knows you've got rich
relatives...

MEG

(interrupting, with
indignant spirit)
Aunt March, how dare you say such a
thing? My John wouldn't marry for
money any more than I would. I'm
not afraid of being poor and I know
we shall be happy because John
loves me and I love him. . .
(she stops short,
remembering she told him
no)

AUNT MARCH

Highty-tighty...you remember this,
young lady, if you marry this Rook
or Hook or Crook...he'll take care
of you not one penny of my money
will he get.

By this time she has almost disappeared into the living room.
Meg looks down sadly and then over to Laurence house feeling
she's lost him now. The front door opens and Brooke comes in.
Meg turns toward him surprised.

BROOKE

(going to her)
My darling, did you mean it? I came
back for my umbrella and I couldn't
help hearing. Then you will give me
leave to work for you. . .to love
you.

MEG

(as they look into one
another's eyes)
Yes, John.

They go into each other's arms.

Jo, breezing out to hear with glee the details of Meg's
refusal, is thunderstruck at the sight of the two in each
other's arms.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

73 EXT. GARDEN - MARCH HOME - AFTERNOON

73

A simple pretty garden wedding with Meg and John kneeling beneath a homemade arch of green, Mr. March performing the ceremony. Jo, Beth, Amy, Marmee, Laurie, Mr. Laurence, Hannah and other guests are gathered around, varying expressions on their faces. The past two years have made some changes in them all.

MR. MARCH

...as they have given and pledged their troth, each to the other and have declared the same by giving and receiving a ring, and by joining hands...I pronounce that they are man and wife. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.

(he then performs the benediction, Meg and John still kneeling)

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve and keep you that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen.

Mr. March completes the benediction, puts his prayer book down and helps Meg and Brooke to rise.

MEG

(to Brooke)

The first kiss for Marmee.

Meg kisses Marmee, then turns and embraces Brooke as the guests gather around them, all talking indistinctly and offering congratulations.

Soon we see the girls and young people dancing around Meg and Brooke, with the other guests watching. There is laughter and music and the sound of indistinct talking.

74 EXT. WOODS NEAR MARCH HOME

74

We see Jo leaning against a tree, looking out wistful eyed, thinking over some of the happy times that have passed.

At the gate we see Laurie saying goodbye to Amy and Beth.

LAURIE
Goodbye, Amy.

AMY
Goodbye.

LAURIE
Bethie.

BETH
(turning to go back to
house)
Goodbye.

LAURIE
Goodbye.

Laurie opens the gate and starts through. He stops as he sees Jo seated by the tree and goes over, looking at her with tender humor. Jo tries to smile at him but there are tears in her eyes as she looks up.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Oh, don't mind, Jo...
(he sits down beside her)
...You've still got me. I'm not
good for much, I know, but I'll
stand by you all the days of my
life.

JO
(patting his hand)
I know you will. You don't know
what a comfort you are to me,
Laurie.

LAURIE
(he raises her hand
ardently to his lips and
kisses it
Jo...

JO
(trying to stop what his
expression tells her is
coming)
No, no, no, Laurie, don't say it.

LAURIE
(flushed and excited all
at once)
I will, and you must hear me. Oh,
it's no use, Jo.

(MORE)

LAURIE (CONT'D)

You've kept away from me ever since
I got back from college.

(reproachfully)

And I studied so hard and I got.
...I graduated with honors... it
was all for you.

JO

(with tender compunction)

I know, and I'm so proud of you.

LAURIE

Then, won't you listen, please?

((trying to get it all at
once, and holding onto
her hand)

Oh, I've loved you ever since I've
known you. I couldn't help it. I've
tried to show it but you wouldn't
let me, and now I'm going to make
you hear and give me an answer, for
I just can't go on so any longer.

(as Jo just looks at him,
hating to hurt him;
humbly)

I know I'm not half good enough for
you, but well. . .if you love me,
you can make me anything you like.

JO

As though I'd change you, Laurie,
you should. . .you should marry
some lovely accomplished girl who
adores you; someone who would grace
your beautiful home. I shouldn't.

(as he tries to protest,
she shakes her head)

I loathe elegant society and you
like it. And you hate my scribbling
and I can't get on without it; and
we should quarrel...

LAURIE

(breaking in)

No, we shouldn't.

JO

Oh, yes, we always have, you know.
And everything would be horrid...if
we were ever foolish enough to...

LAURIE

(breaking in rapturously)

Marry? Oh now, it wouldn't, Jo.

(MORE)

LAURIE (CONT'D)

It would be heaven.

(pleadingly)

Aw, don't disappoint us,
 dear...don't. Everybody expects it.
 Grandfather has set his heart on
 it, and I just can't go on without
 you. Say you will.

He is his most wheedle some charming self, and it takes all
 Jo's strength of mind to resist him.

JO

(shaking her head)

I can't.

(as he drops his head, she
 strokes his hair, feeling
 as if she has stabbed her
 dearest friend)

Oh, Laurie, I'm sorry so
 desperately sorry.

(she holds him close as
 she talks, sobbing)

I'm so grateful to you, and so
 proud and fond of you. I don't know
 why I can't love you the way you
 want me to. I've tried. But I can't
 change the feeling, and it would be
 a lie to say I do when I don't...

(breaking off wretchedly)

LAURIE

Really truly, Jo?

JO

Really truly, dear...

(she leans back against
 the tree as he looks up
 at her)

I don't think I'll ever marry.

LAURIE

(with sudden passionate
 vindictiveness)

Oh, yes, you will...yes, you will.
 You'll meet some good-for- nothing
 no-account idiot and you'll fall in
 love with him and work and live and
 die for him. I know you will. It's
 your way...and I'll have to stand
 by and see it. Well, I'll be hanged
 if I do.

(savagely springing up)

JO
(frightened; trying to
grab him as he flies off)
Laurie, where are you going?

LAURIE
(savagely; over his
shoulder as he flings
himself off)
To the devil, and I hope you'll be
sorry.

JO
(coming to gate; calling,
alarmed)
Laurie, please.

But he does not turn back and she stares after his retreating
figure with tears in her eye.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

75 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

75

Jo is at the window in her nightgown, looking out into the moonlight. Mrs. March opens the door softly, having just come from Beth's and Amy's on one of her nocturnal rounds - tiptoes to bed to cover Jo and is surprised to find bed empty and thrown about, as though after a restless attempt to sleep the occupant had got out of it. Her eyes go to window.

MARMEE

(in surprise)

Jo!...Why aren't you in bed? It's late.

JO

(suddenly)

Mother, I want...I want to go away.
(as her mother turns in
astonishment)

I mean just for a little while. I don't know...I feel restless and anxious to be doing something. I'd like to hop a little way and try my wings.

MARMEE

(concealing her anxiety
with humor)

Where would you hop?

JO

To New York.

(as Marmee looks startled,
she doesn't look at her,
dreaming off into space)

Oh, I've thought about it a lot lately. You can spare me now and I could go to Mrs. Kirke's and help her with the children for part of my board. It wouldn't cost much, and I...I'd see and hear new things and get a lot of new ideas for my stories.

MARMEE

I've no doubt of it.

(trying to seem matter- of-
fact)

Jo, nothing's happened between you and Laurie?

(MORE)

MARMEE (CONT'D)

(as Jo rises and crosses
room)

Don't be surprised, dear. Mothers
have to have sharp eyes, especially
when their daughters keep their
troubles to themselves.

JO

(in quick remorse)

Oh, Marmee, I'd have told you, only
I thought it would blow over, and
it seemed kind of wrong to tell
Laurie's poor little secret...

(she climbs over foot of
bed as she talks)

...Oh, it's only that he's got a
foolish romantic notion in his
head, and I think. . .I think if I
go away for a time he may get over
it.

MARMEE

(searching Jo's face)

I see...And how do you feel about
this foolish romantic notion?

(she strokes Jo's hair)

JO

I love him dearly, as I always
have.

(troubled)

I feel as though I'd stabbed my
dearest friend, and yet, I don't
want to make a mistake.

MARMEE

(after a moment's
reflection)

You're right, Jo. I think it would
be a good idea for both your sakes.

(Jo looks at her, grateful
for her understanding)

Now, come to bed, dear. I'll talk
it over with father and if he
agrees we'll write Mrs. Kirke...

(kisses her goodnight)

Good night, dear.

JO

Good night, Marmee.

LAP DISSOLVE:

INSERT - SIGN

MRS. KIRKE'S BOARD AND ROOMS EXCELLENT TABLE

LAP DISSOLVE:

76

INT. PARLOR - MRS. KIRKE'S BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

76

Jo, feeling somewhat strange in these surroundings, in clothes in which she has just arrived, satchel beside her on floor, is seated with Mrs. Kirke, a bustling soul who wears a cap.

MRS. KIRKE

(to conclude)

Now, my dear, I think I've told you everything, and it will be a great load off my mind knowing the children are safe with you...

(rising and leading way to door)

...I'm very busy so I'll have Mamie show you to your room.

(calling toward door)

Mamie!

(back to Jo)

I've given you a little inside room. It's all I had, but it has a table you can use for your writing...

(again)

MAMIE!

Mrs. Kirke goes through doorway towards hall.

MRS. KIRKE (CONT'D)

(continuing)

...You must come down here some after dinner and be sociable. I promised your mother I wouldn't let you get homesick, and I have only the most refined people in my house Mamie!

This last as she turns to door and yells, hits Mamie in the face as she arrives breathlessly.

MAMIE

(almost hidden by huge pile of flat laundry)

Here I am, Miz Koike.

MRS. KIRKE

Oh, Mamie, this is Miss Josephine...

Mamie curtsies returning Jo's smile of greeting.

MRS. KIRKE (CONT'D)
Will you take her up to her room
and find the children?

MAMIE
Yes.

MRS. KIRKE
I'll see you later, my dear.

MAMIE
Right this way, please.

CAMERA FOLLOWS them as they cross and go up the stairway.

MAMIE (CONT'D)
(calling)
Children children!
(conversationally)
...They ain't a bad lot but, oh my
stars, they take a deal of
handling.

77 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

77

As Mamie arrives on the landing she sets her load down on the post, frowns and looks off.

MAMIE
...Jimmy...Kitty...you hold me!..
(looks downstairs yelling)
...Come on out...I know where you
are.

This works and a door nearby bursts open with the children laughing and yelling. They come out of the door all talking at once and run to Mamie and Jo. The "bear" on all fours is hot after Tina, his head under the mounted head, and there is a roughhouse with the children shrieking and tearing away from him.

TINA
(excitedly)
Oh, the bear's going to eat my
baby... Oh, save me!

With renewed zest, the Professor (the "bear"), catching sight of Jo's feet, and thinking it's Mamie, growls and starts pushing her around the hall, to Jo's startled reactions, while the children shriek and Mamie tries to pull away from Tina who is screaming.

MAMIE
 (frantically)
 Professor! Professor!...

The Professor, surprised at hearing her voice come from another direction, stands on his knees, lifting the bear-rug and seeing Mamie over there, turns and looks up in amazement to see whom he has been attacking.

PROFESSOR
 (seeing Jo, thrown into
 confusion)
 Oh...Oh, I beg your pardon.
 Please...
 (they all laugh)
 ...I'm so sorry.

MAMIE
 (to children)
 This is Miss Josephine what's got
 yer in charge now.

JO
 Hello.

MAMIE
 (indicating the Professor)
 And this is Professor Bhaer.

JO AND PROFESSOR
 (he bows and she smiles)
 How do you do.

But the effect is spoiled by the children who recover and grab at the Professor.

DOROTHY
 Come on, let's finish the game.

TINA
 I want to play some more.

PROFESSOR
 (wishing they weren't
 quite so fond of him;
 warding them off and
 straightening himself
 again)
 That is for Miss Josephine to say.
 ...but I am afraid we have
 frightened her already.

JO

(laughing)

Oh, no, but I didn't expect to find
a grizzly bear in the upper hall.

(they all laugh)

Mamie picks up her bundle of linen
and starts to go off down the hall.

PROFESSOR

Oh, now, now, Mamie...wait,
wait...the back is too young to
carry such heavy loads.

(as he talks he takes the
linen from her and hands
pieces to the children)

...Come on, children, let's play
soldiers. Tina, you are the
general.

(putting her at head of
line)

and you're the captain...

(putting others in line)

...and here, Lieutenant....

(he gets in back of the
line with most of the
load)

forward march!...

They all march down the hall, carrying the linen and keeping
in step to the Professor's singing.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

(singing)

So we sound the chorus from Atlanta
to the sea. While we are marching
to the linen closet.

MAMIE

(looking after with a
softened sigh)

Oh, he's such a lovely man! I know
he must have been a gentleman some
time or another, but he's poor as a
church mouse now.

JO

What does he do?

MAMIE

Oh, he...he's...he's a professor.
See? He learns people how they talk
in foreign countries.

(as she starts to lead the
way)

(MORE)

MAMIE (CONT'D)

I don't see what good it does them
when they're living right here.

As they go on down the hall.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

78 INT. JO'S ROOM - EVENING 78

Jo is seated in her room sewing. From another part of the house we hear the piano being played and the professor singing.

79 INT. PARLOR 79

The professor seated at the piano, singing in German as he plays.

PROFESSOR

(singing)

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt Weis
was Ich leide...Allein und
abgetrennt von aller freuden...Seh
Ich ans firmament Nach jener
zeit...

Jo, who has come down from her room, opens the door quietly and sits in back of the professor without being observed by him.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

(singing)

...Ach der mich liebt Und kennt ist
in der weite Nur wer die Sehnsucht
kennt Weis was Ich leide...Allein
und abgetrennt von aller freuden.

(as he comes to the end,
he looks over his
shoulder, feeling someone
there. Seeing Jo he stops
and rises)

Oh, good evening, my little friend.
Good evening.

JO

Oh, please don't stop...
.It's beautiful. I've heard you
play it so often and wanted to ask
you what it was. I'd so like to
send it to my sister.

PROFESSOR

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt. The
words are by Goethe. Do you speak
German?...

Jo shakes her head no.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

(continuing)

...Then I better give it to you in English. Let's see now...

(sits down at piano as he talks)

...Nur wer die Sehnsucht kenn. Ja, ja...

(playing piano, translating for Jo)

...Only who knows what longing is, can know what I suffer. Allein...

(thinks)

...alone and parted far from joy and gladness. My senses fail, a burning fire devours me...

JO

(sympathetically)

My senses fail, a burning fire devours me...

(the professor stops playing)

I know how he felt.

PROFESSOR

(nodding)

Tchaikowsky did, also. That is why he wrote this beautiful, heart-breaking music.

JO

If only I could write something like that. Something splendid that would set other hearts on fire.

PROFESSOR

That is genius...

(he rises)

...But you wish to write, my little friend?

JO

(looking off into dreams)

Yes, that's my longing.

(back to him, eagerly)

I've sold two stories already since I've been here.

PROFESSOR
 (smiling with pleasure)
 Oh, that is very good. I would like
 to read them...may I?

JO
 Oh, would you? I'd so like to know
 your opinion.

PROFESSOR
 I should be very happy. You have
 the ardent spirit. I like that.

Jo starts to leave, stops and thinks a moment, then turns
 back toward the professor.

JO
 Oh, what shall I ask for at the
 music shop?

PROFESSOR
 (slowly)
 Nur wer die sensucht kennt.

JO
 (it is difficult for her)
 Nur wer die se-...

PROFESSOR
 (helping)
 Sensucht.

JO
 Senu-...

They both laugh.

PROFESSOR
 I think I better write it down for
 you...
 (he feels through his
 pockets for a pencil)
 ...Well, now, here is a teacher
 without a pencil.

Jo notices as he fumbles for pencil that a button is loose on
 his vest.

JO
 Oh, let me sew that button for you
 before you lose it.

PROFESSOR
 Oh, no, I sew on buttons. I...I...

JO
Not very well evidently.

PROFESSOR
Well...

Jo takes a needle and thread from box and starts to sew the button on his vest.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

80 INT. NURSERY - BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

80

Jo has Mrs. Kirke's children seated around the room with Tina on her lap. She is telling them a story which Tina evidently knows by heart.

JO
Who was Goldilocks...a little girl?

TINA
(nodding delightedly)
Yes.

JO
And she.. .

TINA
And...and she...

JO
Went into their house...

TINA
Went in...into their house and...

JO
And saw three chairs three
chairs...

TINA
And saw three chairs One
was the baby one, one was a daddy
one, and one was the mommy one.

JO
Uh-huh, so she sat down in the big
one...

TINA
...and it was too hard...and...

The door opens and Mamie comes in, talking excitedly.

MAMIE
Oh, Miss Josephine, you're to go to
the parlor right away. Someone to
see you.
(she takes Tina off Jo's
lap)

JO
Who is it?

MAMIE
I can't tell you. It's a surprise.

JO
All right.
(rising)
Children, that will be all for
today. Now run along and wash our
hands and faces for tea.

TINA
(leaving)
I'll finish the story tomorrow. The
children leave as Jo talks to
Mamie.

JO
(removing her apron)
All right. Who is it, Mamie?

MAMIE
I can't tell you. It's a
surprise...

INSERT - MAGAZINES

THE FIRST MAGAZINE IS TITLED "THE VOLCANO." MAMIE'S HAND
COMES IN AND REMOVES THE FIRST, REVEALING ANOTHER TITLED "THE
LAST SENSATION."

BACK TO SCENE

MAMIE (CONT'D)
Are these some of yer new stories?..
..Oh, they look creepier than the
"Duke's Daughter." Can I read them?

JO
Yes, if you want to.

Jo leaves to go downstairs as Mamie sits down and starts
reading.

MAMIE
"The Place of the Coffin Tree" or
the "Secrets of a Guilty Heart" by
Josephine March.

81 INT. PARLOR - BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

81

Jo comes running downstairs and stops in the doorway, very surprised at what she sees. Across the room we see Amy and Aunt March.

JO
(delightedly)
Then it's true. Amy!

AMY
Darling!

They fall into each others' arms, laughing, kissing and embracing with joyful cries. Jo is even glad to see Aunt March whom she kisses warmly.

JO
Oh, Aunt March!

AUNT MARCH
Oh, Josephine.

JO
Oh, I'm so glad to see you.

AMY
Were you surprised?

Jo whirls Amy around and sits her down, she kneels between the two.

JO
Tell me everything.

AUNT MARCH
Well, we can't stop now. We've got to get to the Shipping Office before it closes.

JO
(questioningly)
Shipping Office!
(then thrilled)
Aunt March, Europe?

AUNT MARCH
I'm taking Amy with me. Well, maybe you can go next time.

JO
(disappointed)
Next time?

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

(she looks down sadly,
then trying to smile)

Well, tell me, is Meg all right?
And Marmee and Father? And how's my
Beth?

AMY

(not so assured)

She's better again but she isn't
rosy as she used to be.

JO

Oh, my poor Beth. Why doesn't she
get strong?

(trying to be more
cheerful)

And...and Laurie?

AMY

(surprised)

Didn't you see them when they were
here? He and his grandfather have
been in Europe for weeks.

JO

(incredulous)

Laurie...in New York? And didn't
come to see me?

AUNT MARCH

(severely)

I'm sure you can't blame him after
the way you picked up and trotted
off without so much as saying
goodbye to any of us...

(as she talks, Aunt March
rises and goes toward the
door, Amy and Jo
following)

I think you've treated everybody
shamefully. Come along, Amy.

AMY

(tenderly)

Oh, Jo dear, I...I wish it were
you. I know how you've always
longed to go.

JO

(talking fast)

Oh, no, darling. It's your reward.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

You've always done sweet things to please Aunt March and think of all the wonderful things you are going to see the Turners...the Raphaels and the Leonardos...

AUNT MARCH

(at door)

Amy! You seem to forget waiting, cabs cost money.

As Aunt March stands waiting at the door, Amy and Jo come up to her.

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)

That's the trouble with folks who never had anything. Easy come, easy go. We'll be right back, Josephine.

JO

(as she embraces Amy)

Goodbye, darling.

Jo closes the door on them. The smile she has forced for Amy's sake fades and we see what it really means to her. She gives a little sob, picks up her skirts and goes upstairs.

82 INT. HALLWAY - UPSTAIRS

82

As Jo comes up the stairs, the Professor sees her from the door of his room and comes running out to her.

PROFESSOR

Oh, Miss Josephine Miss Josephine.

JO

(stopping)

Yes, Professor Bhaer.

PROFESSOR

I have read your stories and I would like to return them to you. Will you please come in?

JO

Oh yes, thank you. Jo follows him into his room.

83 INT. PROFESSOR'S ROOM

83

The Professor picks up some papers from his desk and comes over toward Jo.

JO
Did you like them?

PROFESSOR
Well, Miss March, I must be honest.
I was disappointed. Why do you
write such artificial
characters...such artificial plots,
villains, murderers and...and such
women. Why don't you write a...

For Jo this is too much. She turns to the wall and sobs. The professor, looking up, breaks off as he sees the tears in her eyes.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
(in horrified self-
remorse)
...Oh, Miss March, please. I am so
sorry. Now, oh, I didn't want to
hurt you. I wanted to help you. Oh,
what a blundering fool I am.

JO
(as she turns toward him,
drying her tears away,
still sobbing)
Oh, please, it isn't that. Oh,
please, don't pay any attention to
me.

PROFESSOR
(he takes a sack of candy
and handkerchief out of
his pocket, hands her the
handkerchief)
Oh, forgive me, please. Come, sit
down...
(they sit down as Jo wipes
tears away)
...Forgive me.

JO
Oh, no, no, it's just that
everything seems to come at once.
Oh the rest doesn't matter so much.
I can bear that. But Laurie...I can
never get over Laurie.

PROFESSOR
(whose face has changed; a
pang)
Oh, Herr Laurie...your friend.
Something has happened to him?

JO
 (nodding)
 Yes.

PROFESSOR
 Oh.

JO
 No, no, no...something has happened to me. He came to New York and he didn't even come to see me.

PROFESSOR
 What a fool he must be.

JO
 Oh, no, no...it's my fault. Only I thought...oh, what does it matter what I thought?
 (she rises)
 ...I've made a mess of it as I do of everything.
 (stopping, turning to Professor angrily)
 ...But I have tried and when I think of Aunt March taking Amy to Europe when she always promised she'd take me not that I begrudge Amy the trip...but well, I suppose that's just what I am doing.

They sit down again.

PROFESSOR
 (sympathetically)
 Oh, the trip to Europe that you so looked forward to. That is too bad. That is a cruel disappointment, I know. And then on top of it, a stupid professor...he comes blundering and makes things worse.

JO
 (wiping her eyes angrily)
 Oh, no, no, no. If I can't stand the truth, I'm not worth anything.
 (as he lightens a little, for this bravery is what he loves in her and brings forward the Volcanos)
 I didn't think those stories were so very good.
 (wistfully humorous)
 (MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

But you see...well, the "Duke's Daughter" paid the butcher's bill, and the "Curse of the Coventrys" was the blessing of the Marches...because it sent Marmee and Beth to the seashore.

PROFESSOR

(who has smiled a little during this but sobered at the finish; nodding with troubled slowness)

Yes, that is what I have thought. And then I have said to myself, I...maybe have no...no right to speak.

(but looking at the papers, straightening himself and speaking almost violently)

But then again I said to myself. ...I maybe have no right to be silent.

(he rises, picks up papers from table)

...For, Miss March, you have talent.

JO

(taking in breath)

NO! Do you really think so?

PROFESSOR

(so earnest one knows he could never be anything but truthful)

Otherwise I would not say it. And you know that. And I say to you, sweep mud in the street first before you are false to that talent. Say to yourself, I will never write one single line which I have not felt first in my own heart. Say to yourself, while I am young, I will write the simple, beautiful things that I understand now. And maybe later when I am a little older, and when I have felt life more, then I will write of these poor wretches. But I will make them love and breathe like my Shakespeare did.

The professor kneels by Jo as he continues talking earnestly.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Will you do that, my little friend?

JO
Oh, yes, I'll try. But I don't
think I'll ever be a Shakespeare do
you?

PROFESSOR
Oh, but you can be a Josephine
March. And I assure you that is
plenty.

JO
Oh!

PROFESSOR
Oh, and now don't feel too
disappointed about that trip...
(takes stick of peppermint
out of sack and hands it
to Jo)
...Now here...

JO
Oh, peppermint. Good.
(she eats candy as he
talks)

PROFESSOR
Those of us who have been all over
the old world and find many things
here in the new that are beautiful
and young...
(his eyes rest upon her,
the most vibrant and
young of all he has met
in a weary world)

JO
(as she rises; gratefully)
Oh, thank you.

PROFESSOR
(a little twinkle in his
eye)
Well, then, you are not angry with
the blundering professor who takes
the wrong times for his lectures?

They stop in doorway.

JO
(smiling, with sincere
feeling)
How could I be?
(she puts out her hand in
her direct way to prove
it and he takes it in a
warm grip of friendship)

PROFESSOR
(as she goes out the door)
Auf weidersehn, my little friend.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

84 INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - HIGHEST TIER

84

Jo and the professor sit close together, oblivious of the poor foreign element about them, while the exquisite music pours forth its undying music, filling them with some of its intoxication. Jo is leaning forward a little, drinking it in and looking down to the stage with beglamoured eyes, while the professor is looking at her. To him the pleasure is all in seeing hers.

CHORUS

(singing)

Io sperai chea me la vita tronca
aves seil mio spavento Ma la morte
non m'aita, vivo ancor per mio
tormento. Da' miei lumi caddeil
velo, mi tradi la terrae il cielo

As the chorus continues the professor hands the opera glasses to Jo and she looks at the chorus intently through them.

CHORUS (CONT'D)

(continuing)

...Vorrei piangere e non poso,
m'abbandonail m'abbandonail
pianto ancor!

LAP DISSOLVE:

85 INT. HALLWAY - BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

85

We see the professor open the door and Jo comes in, both aglow with the spell of the evening. Jo is talking excitedly but indistinctly.

PROFESSOR

Oh, did you really like it?

JO

Oh, I never had such a...

PROFESSOR

Happy, my little friend.

JO

Oh, she was divine. Oh...oh, I
don't want to be a writer any more.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

I want to be a wonderful singer and thrill thousands of people so that they cheer and throw flowers at me like that.

She stops by mail table from force of habit, picks up a letter and starts up the stairs, the professor behind her.

PROFESSOR

(laughing at her and loving her)

Bravo...bravo! But I wouldn't make up my mind too soon... because at the Art Museum you wanted to be a sculptress at the circus you thought the bareback rider was the most beautiful thing in the world...

JO

I know, but to sing like that.

They continue on up the stairs.

86

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

86

Jo is humming the music from the opera. The professor is laughing and shushing her, reminding her of the sleeping boarders.

JO

Oh, I forgot. Oh, but there's something inside of me tonight that makes me want to shout.

PROFESSOR

And what would you shout?

JO

I'd say "Look at me, world. I'm Jo March. And I'm so happy." Oh.

PROFESSOR

(tenderly)

My little friend, you are so happy. Then you haven't missed so much lately your home, and your old friends.

(he looks at her a little keenly as he says the last, hoping for himself a little in spite of everything)

JO
Oh, but you...you're responsible
for that...

They sit down on the steps as Jo continues talking.

JO (CONT'D)
...Oh, but I don't think they are
missing me much just now either.
They're too busy with Meg and the
blessed babies.

PROFESSOR
Oh, yes, yes...and how are those
remarkable twins?

JO
Wonderful. Meg's so proud of them.
(she hums a little again)

PROFESSOR
Have you heard from Europe?

JO
Oh, yes. Nearly every boat brings a
letter from Amy.

PROFESSOR
And your friend, Herr Laurie...have
you heard from him?

JO
Only thru Amy. They met in Vichy
and had some wonderful times
together.

PROFESSOR
Miss March, I am bold to ask a
favor of you. Would you give me the
address of your father? I wish to
write him and ask him something.

JO
Why yes. He'd be so happy to hear
from you. They almost know you.
I've told them all about you and
they always ask after you in their
letters.

PROFESSOR
Oh, really?

JO
 (tearing open envelope as
 she talks)
 Yes, now I'll show you.

PROFESSOR
 That is nice...
 (he pauses as Jo looks at
 letter, then as she looks
 off sadly)
 ...Not I hope...

JO
 (in a queer breathless
 voice)
 It's Beth. She's...oh, I must go at
 once.
 (she gets up and starts
 toward her door)

PROFESSOR
 (rising)
 Oh, not really. Can I do something
 for you? I...I'm sure there is
 something I can do.

JO
 (recalled to him)
 No, there...there's nothing. Thank
 you.

She leaves him standing there, looking after her helplessly,
 his heart in his eyes.

LAP DISSOLVE:

87 INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - MARCH HOME - DAY

87

Beth is in bed, propped up with pillows. The little sewing
 basket and book Marmee gave her on the bed somewhere. With
 the wreck of her frail body, the soul shines through her
 large eyes with a steadfast courage. One of her hands is in
 both of Jo's who sits close by the bed. To Jo's eyes,
 sharpened by absence, the truth is dreadfully clear, and the
 weight that settled on her heart with Marmee's letter has
 only grown heavier in the half hour she has been home.

BETH
 Oh, Jo, to think you're home. If
 Amy were here we'd all be together.

JO

(kissing her hands)
 She'll be home in the spring,
 darling, and I'm going to have you
 all well and rosy by then.

BETH

(stroking Jo's hair with
 her other hand, tenderly)
 Oh, poor Jo, you mustn't be afraid.
 (a little wondering laugh)
 Doesn't it sound funny me saying
 that to you when you've always said
 it to me.

(dreaming off a little,
 looking up at Jo who has
 Beth's hand on her cheek)
 You've always reminded me of a sea-
 gull, Jo, strong and wild...and
 fond of the wind and the
 storm...dreaming of flying far out
 to sea...and mother always said I
 was like a cricket...chirping
 contentedly on the hearth...never
 able to bear the thought of leaving
 home. But now...it's different. I
 can't express it very well...I
 shouldn't try to to anyone but you,
 because I can't speak out to anyone
 but my Jo...I'm not afraid any
 more. I'm learning that I don't
 lose you; that you'll be more to me
 than ever and nothing can part us
 though it seems to...

(sadly; again the little
 sister)
 But, Jo, I think I'll be homesick
 for you even in Heaven.

Jo puts her arms around her tighter: and so the two sisters
 comfort each other.

LAP DISSOLVE:

INSERT JO'S HAND WRITING

THE PAPER IS ON A SMALL WRITING CASE HELD IN HER LAP. WE
 FOLLOW HER HAND AS SHE WRITES THE LAST FEW LINES.

MY BETH

Oh, my sister, passing from me Out of human care and strife
 Leave me, as a gift, those virtues Which have beautified your
 life By that deep and solemn river Where your willing feet
 now stand---

LAP DISSOLVE:

88

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - DAY

88

Jo has stopped writing. Mr. March is seated by the side of the bed. Marmee is there and Meg with her two children

BETH
 (looking at children)
 The little loves.

MEG
 I'm afraid they're tiring you.

BETH
 Oh, no.

MEG
 It's time for my little regiment to
 take their nap.

Meg picks up one of the babies and Mr. March the other to take them off for their nap. Marmee calls to Hannah to help with the children. Jo goes over to Beth's bedside and sits beside her, stroking her head.

BETH
 They're sweet.

JO
 Yes.

BETH
 (wearily)
 I think I can sleep...
 (she looks up at the
 window and her tired eyes
 lighten)
 ...Oh, look, Jo...my birds...they
 got back in time.

Outside on the window-sill we see two little birds hopping about and playing for a few seconds around the flower box, then they rise and fly upward into the sky. Above this we hear a sudden confused little medley of cries.

JO
Bethie! Bethie!
Mother!

They all rush back into the room where Jo is leaning over Beth's bed. Marmee rushes to Beth, taking her in her arms, sobbing and talking. Meg has buried her face in her father's breast, his arms are around her, comforting her, while he looks to the bed, his face haggard and suffering.

MARMEE
(holding Beth in her arms)
My daughter! My baby...my baby!

Jo lifts her mother up, her arms going around her, barricading her from the bed; her young strength is sustaining the older woman, who for the first time in the picture is supported by someone else, as she breaks and cries in Jo's arms.

JO
(in a clear voice;
vibrantly)
No, no, Marmee. No, we mustn't cry.
We must be glad she's well at last.
Now, Marmee, don't cry...don't cry.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

89 EXT. GARDEN - EUROPE - DAY

89

Against a superb background Amy sits beside a fountain reading the little stack of letters in her lap which she brings here with her every day to re-read in the light of the last dreadful one, for every scrap of detail about Beth. She is wiping the tears from her eyes as Aunt March comes from around behind the fountain and pats her hand sympathetically.

AMY

(suddenly breaking the
silence -- as though she
can't stand this inaction
of waiting any longer)
If only there were another boat
leaving sooner.

AUNT MARCH

Oh, now, dear, you've been so
brave. You must be patient. We're
going back on the first boat. I
still think you should obey your
mother and stay.

AMY

(as she rises;
heartbrokenly)
I know, but I'm sick for home, Aunt
March.
(a gesture toward the
beauty)
I hate all this now. If it weren't
for this I'd have been there...at
least to say goodbye...
(her voice breaks)
Aunt March kisses her on the
forehead. Amy looks up as she sees
someone out of scene.

AMY (CONT'D)

Laurie!
(as she runs to him)
Laurie, oh, I knew you'd come.

Laurie takes Amy in his arms, Mr. Laurence coming toward them.

MR. LAURENCE

(sympathetically))
My child!

AMY
Mr. Laurence!

LAURIE
(whispering and stroking
her hair)
Amy, we were in Germany, dear, and
Marmee's letter had to be
forwarded, but I came the moment I
got it. Well...well, you must
comfort me, too.

Amy pats his cheek while she cries out her heart sickness in
his arms and they start off in the garden.

Mr. Laurence and Aunt March watch them from beside the
fountain.

AUNT MARCH
(in a low grateful voice)
I'm so thankful you're here. I
haven't known what to do with the
child. Perhaps you can persuade her
to stay.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

90 EXT. PORCH - MARCH HOME - DAY

90

Jo is ironing on the back porch. She looks up as she sees Meg, all dressed up to go calling.

JO
Oh, the elegant young matron.

MEG
Jo dear, I have Sallie Moffett's little carriage and I'm going to make some calls.

JO
And you want me to mind the little demons for you while you're gone.

MEG
No, I want you to go with me. Oh, do, dear, it's a lovely day and I want to talk to you.

JO
Well, talk to me now. You know I can't bear calls.

Meg pulls up a chair close to the ironing board as Jo goes on working.

MEG
How's your story coming?

JO
(folding a garment she has just ironed)
Sent it off yesterday.

MEG
(surprised)
Without us reading it?

JO
Well, you can read it when they send it back.

MEG
Oh, Jo!
(getting back to what is on her mind)
I had a letter from Amy.

JO
So did Marmee.

MEG
They're in Valrosa now and she says
it's a paradise.
(she pauses, not quite
sure what to say, then:)
...Jo, I'd like to ask you
something. I've been wondering. .
. . how would you feel if you
should hear that your Laurie was
learning to care for somebody else?

JO
Meg, who?...
(folding handkerchief
carefully)
Amy?
(she looks off
thoughtfully)

MEG
Of course I don't know. I...I can't
be sure. I'm only reading between
the lines.

Jo smiles at her.

MEG (CONT'D)
(relieved)
...Then you wouldn't mind?

JO
Oh, no, Meg, how could I? I think
it would be wonderful, don't you?

MEG
Yes, but I wasn't quite sure. Oh,
forgive me, dear, but I have so
much and you...you seem so alone.
I've thought lately that maybe if
Laurie came back...

JO
Oh, no, no, dear. It's better as it
is. And I'm glad if he and Amy are
learning to love each other. Oh,
you're right about one thing. I am
lonely and maybe if Laurie had come
back I might have said "yes"...
.not that I love him any
differently but because...

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

...well, because it means more to
me now to be loved than it used to.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

91 INT. GARRET - MARCH HOME - LATE AFTERNOON - RAIN

91

We see Jo lying on the old horsehair sofa, sleeping lightly. The door opens softly and Laurie enters, throws his coat and hat down and comes over to Jo's side. Jo awakens. At first she thinks it is part of her dream as she sees Laurie standing there with his old smile and the look he used to wear.

JO
 (delightedly)
 Laurie...
 (she sits up, takes his
 hands)
 ...Oh, my Laurie!

LAURIE
 (sitting down on the couch
 as he talks)
 Oh, dear Jo. Are you glad to see
 me?

JO
 (joyfully)
 Glad! Oh, my blessed boy...words
 can't express my gladness.
 (looking at door,
 expecting to see Amy)
 ...and where's your wife?

LAURIE
 They all stopped in at Meg's, but I
 couldn't wait to see you.
 They'll all be along presently.

JO
 Oh, let me look at you.

LAURIE
 Well, don't I look like a married
 man and the head of a family, huh?

JO
 (shaking her head
 laughingly)
 Not a bit, and you never will...
 (looking at him
 admiringly)
 ...but you have grown bigger and
 bonnier.

LAURIE

Yes.

JO

But you're the same scape-grace as ever, despite that very elegant moustache...

(she flicks the tie out of his vest)

...you can't fool me.

LAURIE

(laughingly fixing tie)

Now really, Jo, you should treat me with more respect...

(sudden low-voiced sincerity)

...Jo dear, I want to say one thing and then we'll put it by forever.

JO

(shaking her head with a tender smile)

No, Laurie...I think it was always meant to be...you and Amy...and it would have come about naturally if you'd only waited.

LAURIE

(smiling at her in understanding)

As you tried to make me understand.

JO

(a glint of her old scolding ways)

But you never could be patient.

LAURIE

(as both smile a little remembering his old head-strong ways tenderly)

Then we can go back to the happy old times...the way you wanted it...when we first knew one another?

JO

(shaking her head and thinking about those happy days with a touch of sadness)

We can never be boy and girl again, Laurie.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

Those happy old times won't come back and we shouldn't expect them to. We are man and woman now...

(she looks back at him meeting his eyes with simple directness and feeling)

...we can't be playmates any longer but we can be brother and sister to love and help one another all the rest of our lives, can't we, Laurie?

Laurie feels the truth of her words and they smile fondly at one another, thinking of the memories they call up.

Hearing voices, they both look at each other excitedly, getting to their feet.

JO (CONT'D)

Oh, there they are.

92

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

92

The family is all trooping in - Mr. Laurence, Aunt March, Marmee, Father, Meg, John, each of the latter carrying a twin. Jo comes tearing down the stairs, followed by Laurie and as Jo and Amy go into each other's arms, there is excited confusion, kissing, greeting, exclamations over each other --- and pandemonium. There is much confusion, shaking off of rain and the gentlemen helping ladies off with wet wraps and bonnets; the babies who have been all wrapped up are uncovered and revealed - general commotion.

Distinguishable Ad Libs

MARMEE

You look very well, Aunt March.

AUNT MARCH

After all the money I've spent on my rheumatism I come back on a day like this.

HANNAH

Heavens to Betsy! If she ain't dressed in silk from head to foot.

AMY

Where is she? Where's Jo?...Oh, Jo!

As Jo comes to bottom of stairs she takes Amy in her arms and hugs her excitedly.

JO

Amy!

LAURIE

(following Jo downstairs)

Doesn't she look marvelous, Jo?

Everyone is still talking indistinctly as Amy takes Jo by the hand and leads her into the living room.

93

INT. LIVING ROOM - MARCH HOME - DAY

93

AMY

(caressing Jo's face and
looking her over)

Oh, Jo, I'll never forgive myself
for staying away so long and
leaving you to bear everything all
alone.

JO

(taking her in her arms)

Darling!...

(to Laurie as he comes
through doorway)

To think, only yesterday we were
pulling her hair and buttoning her
pinafore...

(turning Amy around)

...and now she's a grown-up married
lady with a bustle...

(with that she gives her
bustle a little slap)

The others coming through the
doorway laugh as they see this.
General movement as Aunt March is
installed on settee, others about
the room.

AUNT MARCH

(grumbling as usual)

I've spent all my money and I
haven't had a decent meal since
I've been away.

MARMEE

You must be famished. I'll help
Hannah get the tea.

(she starts to go to help
Hannah)

JO
 (stopping her)
 Oh, no, you won't, Marmee. You'll
 sit down here. I'll help Hannah.
 (Marmee sits back down)

AUNT MARCH
 I bought this hat in Paris. How do
 you like it?

There is general indistinct talking heard as Jo walks toward
 stairway.

Jo stops a moment by the stairway cupboard, her heart full of
 happiness at having her family all together again. She looks
 up.

JO
 (softly; throwing a kiss
 heavenward)
 It's fun, isn't it Bethie? Now that
 we're all together again.

Hannah comes in with cloth and things to lay the table.

HANNAH
 Oh, dear...oh, dear...I've got to
 get some milk. I haven't enough for
 the babies.

JO
 I'll go.

HANNAH
 But it's raining cats and dogs.

JO
 (slipping into old coat)
 I love it.

The front door bell is heard as Jo turns and goes out the
 back way to get the milk.

HANNAH
 Oh, sakes alive. There's the front
 door bell.

94 INT. HALLWAY

94

Hannah opens the door and we see Professor Bhaer with a
 dripping umbrella, collar turned up, carrying something
 carefully protected from rain under his coat.

As always there is a winning incongruity between his shabby but neat clothes, and his gentility of manner.

PROFESSOR

(slightly formal greeting)

How do you do? Is this the residence of Miss March?

HANNAH

(impressed by his manner without knowing why says "yes" with a little involuntary bend of the knee living up to his stateliness; eagerly)

Why, yes.

PROFESSOR

Miss Josephine March?

HANNAH

Yes.

PROFESSOR

May I speak with her?

(he puts umbrella down, takes off his hat)

HANNAH

(wondering who he is)

She's out but I'm expecting her back any minute.

PROFESSOR

(disappointed)

Oh.

HANNAH

Won't you come in?

PROFESSOR

Thank you...thank you...

(his face lights up as he comes into the hallway, but as he gets a glimpse and hears the voices and laughter, thinking it is a social gathering--)

...Oh, no, no, thank you. She has guests. No, thank you very much.

(carefully taking out from his coat the wrapped up book)

(MORE)

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
 But will you please give this to
 her and tell her Professor Bhaer
 left it. Thank you. Professor
 Bhaer. Thank you very much.
 (he picks up his umbrella
 and goes out the door)
 Goodbye.

HANNAH
 Goodbye.

95 EXT. WALK - MARCH HOME

95

As the Professor turns around we see his disappointment at this long trip he has made in the expectation of seeing Jo's face when she opened the package. He looks back a little wistfully as he starts down the step putting up his umbrella. He reaches the gate and opening it he collides with Jo hurrying up with the milk -- and from the shock he pushes his umbrella back.

JO
 (hardly able to believe
 her eyes)
 Oh, Professor Bhaer.

PROFESSOR
 (staring at her)
 My little friend, I was just here
 to leave your book. I wanted to
 tell you that my friend published
 it and he has great hopes. He
 thinks...

JO
 (interrupting wildly)
 Oh, never mind what he thinks.
 (hear in her eyes)
 Did you like it?

PROFESSOR
 (his face transfigured)
 Oh, my little friend, it has such
 truth. Such simple beauty...
 (in his excitement he
 drops his umbrella trying
 to express with his hands
 what is in his heart)
 ...In...in English quick I cannot
 tell you what it gives me in my
 heart.

JO

(with a catch at her
heart)

But you were going without telling
me.

(laughing and trembling
for joy at the narrow
escape)

If I hadn't come by...I never would
have seen you again...

(but realizing they are
standing here in the
rain)

Oh, but come...you're getting wet.
(she takes him by the arm)

PROFESSOR

I couldn't intrude. You have
guests.

JO

(pulling him along)

Oh, no, only my family...

(they stop on porch, Jo
still talking)

...My sister has just come home.
She is married to that boy I told
you about.

PROFESSOR

(stopping short in his
tracks)

Herr Laurie?

JO

Yes.

PROFESSOR

Oh!

(his heart seems to have
stopped too)

JO

(not even noticing)

This is the first time we have all
been together for a long time.

(she rings bell for Hannah
to open door)

PROFESSOR

(talking fast, realizing they'll soon be with a lot of people and he must get something said, or his heart will burst)

Oh, please, please, just...just one moment before...I have...

I have a wish to ask something...

(his hands clasped at the wonder he is asking, when he is so poor, so lonely)

Would you...Oh, I have...I have no courage to think that...but could I dare hope that you...I...I...

(Jo is looking at him wondering if he means a proposal and praying that he does; but already he is afraid he has said too much and ruined everything; wringing his hands a little)

I know I shouldn't make so free as to ask, I have nothing to give, but my heart so full, and these empty hands...

JO

(putting her hands in his)

Not empty now.

PROFESSOR

Oh, heart's dearest!

They stand looking at one another and then go into each other's arms.

Hannah opens the door and stares at them a moment. Jo disengages herself and turns to go through doorway with the Professor.

JO

Welcome home!

They go through doorway, Hannah watching them happily as she closes the door.

THE END