

A Wayne Scott • LifeHouse Production



# Little Women

Script, Music and Lyrics by  
WAYNE ROBERT SCOTT

Additional Music and Lyrics by  
Kelly & Bethany Schwartzkopf & W. R. Scott

*Based on the Classic 1869 Novel by Louisa May Alcott*

**2010 Revised Edition**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Appearance)

<b>Jo March</b>	Tomboyish, yet attractive and honest writer
<b>Meg March</b>	Pretty and matronly eldest sister
<b>Amy March</b>	Self-important, slender, blonde artist
<b>Beth March</b>	Shy, peace-making musician
<b>Hannah Mullet</b>	Beloved family servant (Possibly Irish)
<b>Marmee</b>	Sweet tempered yet firm March matriarch
<b>Aunt March</b>	Peppery, wealthy eccentric elder
<b>Laurie</b>	Slender, dark, charmingly boyish youth
<b>John Brooke</b>	Quiet, kindly and handsome tutor to Laurie
<b>Mr. Laurence</b>	Stately gentleman of the “old school”
<b>Father</b>	Gentle, graying, scholarly chaplain
<b>Professor Bhaer</b>	Rumpled, benevolent German with accent and beard

**Messenger, Mrs. Hummel, Hummel Children,  
Jennings (Servant), Mrs. Gardiner, Sally Gardiner, Doctor Anderson, Townfolk**

# “LITTLE WOMEN”

By Wayne R. Scott

## SYNOPSIS OF SONGS

### ACT I

#### Overture

1. “Just Wait and See”.....Jo, Meg, Beth, Amy
2. “The Bells of Christmas” .....Marmee, Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy
3. “The Aunt March March” .....Aunt March, Jo, Meg, Beth, Amy  
“Just Wait and See” (Reprise).....Marmee, Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy
4. “We’re Sharing our Christmas”.....Beth, Jo, Meg, Amy, Marmee, The Hummels  
“The Bells of Christmas” (Reprise).....Hannah, Meg, Jo, Amy, Laurie, John, Townfolk
5. “I Know You”.....Jo, Laurie, Mr. Laurence
6. “A Call to the Ball”.....Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy, Marmee, Aunt March, Mr. Laurence, Townfolk
7. “New Year’s Waltz”.....Townfolk, (Cast Ensemble)
8. “Margaret March”.....John, Townfolk
9. “Marmee’s Lullaby”.....Marmee  
“Just Wait and See” (Reprise).....Jo, Laurie  
“Marmee’s Lullaby” (Reprise).....Marmee, Jo

### ACT II

#### Entr’acte

- “Just Wait and See” (Reprise).....Laurie, Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy, Hannah
10. “The Big News”.....Laurie, Amy  
“The Aunt March March” (Reprise).....Aunt March  
“Margaret March” (Reprise).....John, Meg, Townfolk (Cast Ensemble)
11. “You, Josephine March”.....Professor Bhaer, Laurie  
“Marmee’s Lullaby” (Reprise).....Marmee’s Voice  
“The Bells of Christmas” (Reprise).....The March Family, Laurie, Mr. Laurence  
“You, Josephine March” (Reprise).....Professor Bhaer
12. “A Gentle Man”.....Jo, Professor Bhaer  
Finale: “We’re Sharing our Christmas” (Reprise).....Cast Ensemble

# “Little Women”

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## ACT I

### Overture

#### Prologue

*(Near end of Overture, Jo's voice is heard as lights come up to reveal Marmee and a wounded soldier in dim lighting.)*

**Jo (V.O.)** My sisters and I remember that winter as the coldest of our childhood... a cold winter made colder by the onset of the Civil War. A temporary poverty had settled on our family and the war darkened our world with a cloud of uncertainty. But somehow in that dark time, our family—the March Family—seemed to glow in a special light. Looking back, I see now—as Marmee would say—that we were truly illumined by the radiant Light that can only come from God Himself.

#### SCENE 1: ROAD AND GATE OF MARCH FAMILY HOME, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

*(As the prologue is heard we see Marmee, in the March living area, helping a wounded soldier put on his overcoat. She then walks him to the door of their home to send him on his way.)*

**Soldier** Your husband said I would be met with kindness here but, that was an understatement! Thank you again for the delicious meal Mrs. March.

**Meg** *(Rushing in from the kitchen with a basket of food.)* Here is some food for the last leg of your journey home. You'll never know how much comfort you have given by sharing the stories about Father.

**Soldier** It was my pleasure.  
**Marmee** *(As she walks out and toward the road in a private moment.)* Please take this. *(The soldier starts to protest.)* Nonsense, you will never make it home for Christmas on foot. Walk to the crossroads and wait for a coach. This will get you home. *(She hands him and he humbly accepts a bill of currency.)*

**Soldier** God bless you Ma'am. I pray that next Christmas your husband will be home with all of you! *(Exits)*

**Marmee** Thank you Son, safe journey! *(Marmee watches him leave and is shortly joined by Meg.)* Meg I have a few errands I must complete. I'll just be a few hours. Please keep an eye out for Jo! She gets lost in her thoughts and forgets to come home!

**Meg** Of course Marmee, I'll see to things here while you are away.

*Jo runs through audience "town area" laughing and shouting "Merry Christmas" to various assembled townfolk. She shakes the hands of those passing by her as her three sisters Meg, Beth, and Amy watch and point gleefully from their window. Jo's entrance could be accompanied by her boisterously singing a Christmas song a capella. The sisters wave Jo in out of the cold)*

#### SCENE 2: THE MARCH FAMILY LIVING ROOM

**Beth** Where have you been, Jo?

**Jo** In the park. *(beat)* Writing again, Beth.

**Beth** How did it go?

**Jo** Mostly fine, until I died.

**Amy** You were killed Jo? Oh, I hope you didn't harm yourself!

**Jo** No, Amy, not really. I died all too predictably! (*Crumples the piece of paper she had been working on earlier and tosses it away*) And, so the scene died too,

**Meg** Sorry, Jo. I can't imagine how troubling writer's block must be!

**Jo** It's more than that. I need better characters ...no offense but, the people I know are just too ordinary.

**Beth** Look, Jo! We've started trimming the tree! (*All but Jo resume trimming tree*)

**Jo** Oh, Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents. (*Sits to warm at the fireplace*)

**Meg** It's so dreadful to be poor. I especially feel it, because I remember when we used to be rich.

**Jo** Yes, Meg. I remember too.

**Amy** I don't think it's fair for some girls to have lots of pretty things and other girls nothing at all.

**Beth** But Amy... we're much better off than a lot of people— orphans, for instance. We have Father and Marmee... and each other.

**Jo** That's true, Beth But right now we haven't got Father and probably won't have him for a long time. (*All the girls stop and look at Jo*) And maybe never again.

**Amy** The men in the army are having such a terrible winter, aren't they?

**Meg** Yes, Amy. And you know the reason Mother suggested not having any presents this Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure when so many men of the North and South are suffering so.

**Amy** I don't see that we can do very much.

**Jo** We can each do a little— make our own little sacrifices.

**Beth** And we ought to do it gladly— with merry hearts.

**Meg** I'm afraid my heart isn't in it... especially when I have to wear the same old dresses all year.

**Amy** I don't think the little we could spend to help would do any good. It seems like such a— such a big war.

**Jo** That's true. We've each got only a dollar and the army won't be helped much by giving that.

**Beth** I was planning to spend my dollar on new sheet music. I so love music.

**Amy** I wanted to buy a nice box of Faber's pencils. I'm tired of drawing with stubs.

**Jo** Well, Mother didn't say anything about our money and she won't want us to give up everything. Let us each buy what we want and have a little fun. I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it.

**Meg** I know I do. Tutoring those tiresome little children all day when I'm longing to enjoy myself here at home. I'm too tuckered to tutor!

**Jo** Yes, Meg, but how would you like to be stuck for hours helping our fussy old Aunt March the way I am? (*Rising*) Imagine her always trotting around after me! (*Imitating*) "Josephine! Where is that girl?! Oh, Josephine! My stars, I can never find that girl!" (*All the girls laugh*) She just about makes me want to jump out the window!

**Meg** That's certainly no life for an aspiring writer.

**Beth** I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. It makes me sore and my hands get so stiff I can't play our old piano.

**Amy** I don't believe any of you suffer as I do, for you don't have to go to school with impertinent girls who laugh at your dresses and *label* your father because he isn't rich like the rest of them.

**Jo** If you mean "libel," then say so and stop speaking about labeling Father as if he is a pickle bottle.

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

**Jo** Vocabillary!?! (*Whistles*) Christopher Columbus! Aren't we elegant?! It's vocabulary.

**Amy** That's what I said, vocabil --er--voca--er good long words.

**Meg** You shouldn't use slang expressions, Jo. Don't say "Christopher Columbus" it's unladylike.

**Jo** All right, Meg. I'll strike his name from my vocabillary.

**Meg** And you shouldn't whistle either. It's boyish.

**Jo** That's why I do it. (*Deliberately whistles at Meg*)

**Amy** (*Indignant on Meg's behalf*) How rude! I detest incorrigible, unladylike girls.

**Jo** And I hate ninny pinny chit-chats! (*Amy and Jo are nose-to-nose*)

**Beth** Birds in their little nests should agree... (*Jo and Amy look at Beth, then at each other. They laugh*)

**Jo** Leave it to Beth, our kind-hearted little Mouse to put us in our places.

**Meg** (*In a motherly tone*) Really girls, you are both to blame. Amy! You and your silly big words! You'll grow up to be an affected little goose. And you, Jo. You're old enough to drop your boyish tricks. It was cute when you were a girl, but now you are so tall. And you should turn up your hair. After all, you are a young lady.

**Jo** I am not! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two little tails until I'm eighty years old. I'm not going to grow up looking like a china-aster flower. It's bad enough to be a girl anyway—especially when I like boy's work and games and manners.

**Beth** But your hair is so pretty, Jo.

**Meg** The finest in our family.

**Amy** I wish mine were as nice.

**Jo** Oh, I'll never get over my disappointment in not being a boy! Just look at me. Dying to go and fight at Father's side and all I can do is sit and knit! Like a pokey old woman!

**Amy** Poor Jo.

**Meg** It's a shame but it can't be helped.

**Beth** You'll just have to be content with making your name boyish and playing brother to us girls, You poor dear...

**Jo** Oh, I don't want any pity. Someday things will be different and I'll be able to do as I please! Just wait!...

**SONG: "JUST WAIT AND SEE"**

**Jo** Just you wait, yes, just you wait and see!  
Just you wait and see what I shall be  
I may never be a fighter, but one day I'll be a writer  
And I'll write about the things that ought to be—  
A writer's life for me, just wait and see!!

**Meg, Beth, Amy** There she goes on fancy flights of whimsy—  
That's our Jo, she's on the go again  
It doesn't matter if her dreams are flimsy  
She can run a circle 'round a dozen men!

**Jo** *(As sisters laugh)* Go ahead and laugh, but I shall be  
A renown, beloved celebrity!  
*(In Meg's face)* I shall be a star among us  
And by Christopher Columbus  
I shall earn enough to bring us lots of loot  
A female Charles Dickens, to boot!

*(They enact a horse-drawn sled)* And while I'm scheming, let us do some dreaming  
*(As if sewing dresses)* I'll bring us all a lovely winter sled!  
And Meg shall have new dresses worth esteeming  
And a suitor so our tutor will be wed!

**Jo, Beth, Amy** A piano just for Beth, our little Mouse  
**Meg, Jo, Amy** *(Plucking "piano")* And drawing lessons Amy would adore  
**Meg, Jo, Beth** *(Drawing in the air)* Art and music filling up our house  
**All** How could we want or wish for any more?  
*(Key change)*  
Just you wait, yes just you wait and see  
Sometimes dreams become reality  
It may all be idle chatter, but it really doesn't matter  
'Cuz it doesn't cost a cent to hope and dream  
And it all might come to be, just wait and see!  
It just might come to be—just wait—and—see-----!

*(Framed in a final pose)*  
**(Jo)** *(Just wait and see, just wait and see— wait—and—see!)*  
*(Music continues as underscore, eventually fading)*

**Meg** *(Laughing)* Listen to us carrying on like a pack of schemers!  
**Amy** Don't you wish we had the money Papa lost when we were little?  
**Meg** He didn't lose it exactly. He's too kind and gracious, that's all  
**Beth** Yes, about all that. What does it mean to take a man's bond?  
**Jo** Mr. Johnson was Father's best friend— he owed a lot of money and his creditors made demands on him. He took sick and Father took his bond.

**Meg** In other words, Father guaranteed to pay his debts if he failed. He failed all right. Our prosperity came to an end and so did the better times we used to have in this house.

**Jo** They'll come again.

**Meg** I'm sure they will. We're young and talented. Jo will indeed  
be a great writer . Amy— a celebrated artist. Beth—  
a famous pianist.

**Beth** And you Meg?

**Jo** She'll marry a rich suitor and support the rest of us in luxury! *(All laugh)*

**Beth** We'll all be as rich as Aunt March!

**Meg** What a pleasant life she might have, if only she chose to.

**Beth** I don't envy her much, in spite of her money.

**Jo** I guess rich people have as many worries as poor people.

**Meg** My only worry is trying to make this sad little Christmas tree presentable for Marmee.

**Amy** I wonder what's keeping her.

**Jo** She'll be home soon. Meanwhile, let's rehearse the play I wrote to surprise Marmee for Christmas. Come here, Amy, and do the fainting scene. You're stiff as a poker in that. And I *do* mean stiff!

**Amy** I can't help it. I never saw anyone faint and I don't want to get black and blue tumbling down in a heap.

**Jo** But, Amy—

**Amy** You only chose me for the part because there was nobody else to do it.

**Jo** True. Nevertheless, faint like this. *(Illustrates)* Clasp your hands so— and stagger across the room, crying frantically— "Roderigo! Roderigo! Save me! Save me! Oh!" And faint.

**Amy** *(In a ridiculous, stiff monotone)* "Roderigo. Roderigo. Save me. Save me Oh. And faint..."

**Jo** *(Exasperated)* Don't say, "and faint." Faint! Faint! *(Demonstrates melodramatic fainting)* Like this! Now try it again. This time with meaning, expression, depth of feeling, passion and pathos!

**Amy** *(After a pause, delivers lines even more monotonously)* Roderigo. Roderigo. Save me. Save me. Oh." *(She falls foolishly and with exaggerated grace into a chair)*

**Jo** *(Under her breath)* Christopher Columbus! We're doomed.

**Meg** I heard that.

**Jo** Well, when we're laughed off the stage, don't blame me.  
*(Amy pores over script)*

**Meg** *(Looking at script)* I'm amazed at how you write and act  
such splendid things, Jo.

**Jo** Thank you, Meg. *(Pointedly to oblivious Amy)* With proper theatrical training, perhaps our supporting players will improve. When you faint...*(Dumping Amy out of chair onto floor)*... fall to the floor, Amy dearest. Thusly!

**Amy** *(In a heap)* Owww! Maybe I'd be better if the script was better!  
*(Jo begins to retort)*

**Hannah** *(Entering with tea)* Girls and play acting! Hmmm--hmm! My, my! What *is* this world coming to? Come get your tea ladies.

**Meg** Thank you, Hannah.  
*(All partake of tea)*

**Amy** No coffee anymore?

**Hannah** Coffee's scarce and dear. The ships are needed in the war and they have no time to go to Brazil to bring back coffee for Miss Amy March.

**Amy** Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry.

**Hannah** *(Peering out window)* And I guess some folks have nothing better to do than pry into other people's business. We have a spy peering from his window.

**Meg** Who is it Hannah?

**Hannah** Our next door neighbor— that Laurence boy.

**Jo** What Laurence boy?

**Hannah** Mr. Laurence's grandson.

**Jo** Ha! I didn't know the ol' codger had a grandson.

**Hannah** Just arrived last week. And from what I heard he must be a real peach.

**Jo** Why? What's he done?

**Hannah** First, he ran away from school.

**Amy** *(Gasping)* Why that's the bravest thing I ever heard!

**Hannah** They couldn't find him anywhere. When they did find him, he was in an army hospital—wounded! He joined the army under another name and lied about his age.

**Jo** How perfectly splendid! I should like to do the same!

**Hannah** Fine soldier you'd make. *(Imitating her)* "Roderigo!" Ha ha!  
*(Exits, cackling)*

**Jo** Oh, fiddle sticks. *(Opening window and looking out)*

**Meg** Jo, you shouldn't!

**Jo** Now, Meg. It's our own private property and I can look out at it as much as I like.

**Meg** Why, you're as bad as he is! Shameful!

**Beth** Shameful!

**Amy** Shameful!

**Jo** There he is.  
*(Meg, Beth and Amy rush to join Jo in looking out window)*

**Jo** *(Smirking at sisters)* Shameful, eh?... Well I'm glad he's a boy. It'll be nice to know a boy for a change and have a little fun.

**Meg** Now, Jo. Don't say such things.

**Jo** I wonder how I can get to know him. Maybe our cat can get lost and he'd bring it back. And then we'd get to talking and—

**Meg** I don't think that's very romantic...

**Jo** Who said anything about romance? *(Calling out)* Yoo hoo! Hello! Hello!...

**Meg** Jo, you're disgracing us!

**Jo** Yoo hoo! Hello!... *(Pause)*  
*(All gasp)*

**Jo** That dreadful boy!...He waved back  
*(They laugh)*

*(Music begins)*

**Marmee** *(Surprising girls from behind)* I'm glad to find you so merry, my girls!

**Girls** *(Leaping to her)* Marmee! *(All rush to her and help make her comfortable at fireplace)* Let me have your cloak! Give me your bonnet! Sit here, Marmee! I'll remove your overshoes. Are you all right? How are you, Marmee?...

**Marmee** Hello, my dearies. I have a surprise, a letter from papa.

**Girls** *(Framing mother in her chair)* Oh! A letter from Father!  
Isn't it wonderful!? The best Christmas gift of all!

Etc.

**Meg** Quiet! Quiet! Let's let Marmee tell us what he's written...

**Marmee** This is what your Father says...*(Reading letter)* "My dear wife..."

**Father (V.O.)** "And darling children...I know you will be pleased to hear that Mr. Lincoln has chosen Ulysses Grant to lead the Union cause and we are hoping this conflict between the North and South—between brothers and fathers— will soon end. I have been extremely busy as army chaplain and am trying to bring the aid and comfort of our Lord wherever I can. As you are well aware, I am too old to be drafted and not strong enough to be a soldier, but I am doing my part and trusting that God will use me."

**Marmee** Now for the best part of the letter...  
*(Girls become deeply moved)*

**Father (V.O.)** "How are my Little Women? Give them my dearest love and a kiss. Tell them I think of them by day and pray for them by night and find my best comfort in their affections at all times. Year seems so very long to wait until I see them, but remind them that while we wait we may all work, so that these hard days may not be wasted. I know they will remember all I said to them, that they will be loving children to you, and renewing their minds in His word daily, will do their duties faithfully, fight their inner enemies bravely, and conquer themselves so beautifully that when I come back to them, I may be ever fonder and prouder of my Little Women.

### **SONG: "THE BELLS OF CHRISTMAS"**

**All** *(Tearfully,* The Civil War is a cross to bear



*thoughtfully)*  
*(Girls kneeling)*

And peace on earth unites us all in prayer  
Let's be faithful and let us pray  
For the end of war and a brighter day  
In our hearts may this hope excel  
And may God bless Father and keep him well... Amen...  
*(Music continues reflectively as underscore)*

**Amy** *(Reflectively)* I am a selfish girl— but I'll truly try to be better so he won't be disappointed in me.  
**Meg** We all will. I think too much of my looks and hate to work, but I won't anymore if I can help it.  
**Jo** I'll try to be what he calls me— "A Little Woman" — and not be rough and wild.  
**Beth** I'll be all that Father hopes for as the year goes by, for we each have a part to play in the scheme of things.  
**Marmee** I must play my part with you, children. I'll continue to volunteer at the hospital. When you feel discontented, think over the year's blessings and be grateful.  
**Jo** I'm going to take that advice.  
**Meg** So will I.  
**Beth** Me too.  
**Amy** Me, too...

*(Music tempo changes to "march-like" cadence)*

**Aunt March** *(From audience aisle, carrying poodle, walking toward center)* Yoo hoo! Yoo hoo! My stars! Isn't anyone coming out to greet me?  
**The Sisters** *(With foreboding disdain)* Aunt March!... *(The family regards their visitor with chuckles and patience)*  
**Aunt March** *(Slipping on stairs)* I may die this very night right here in the snow. Does anybody care? Will no one help me...?

### **SONG: "THE AUNT MARCH MARCH"**

**Aunt March** *(As the girls clumsily try to help her up)*  
*(To girls)* If I should ever live to be the age of ninety-three,  
I don't think that I'll ever see so strange a family;  
I'm an influential woman of wealth --  
At least pretend to care for my health!  
*(Fanfare)*

**Meg** *(Spoken over fanfare)* Hello Aunt March Are you all right?

**Aunt March** I have far too many aches and pains and worrisome ills  
*(Marching about with her cane on her shoulder like a rifle)* To suffer in this snow at ten below!  
*(Marching girl into home)* And I think I'm on the brink of catching wintry chills,  
My constitution cannot stand this blow;  
And I suspect this rude neglect is carelessness at best,  
And especially when family has come as your guest;  
And I must declare you've brought me to despair:  
A case of sadness— madness— beyond compare!  
We're sorry— sorry— and we care.  
Humph!

**The Sisters**  
**Aunt March**

**Marmee** *(Pleasantly)* Good evening, Aunt March.  
**Aunt March** Humph! What's good about it? It's freezing cold. *(To girls)*  
And you girls haven't shoveled a path to the door. I  
might have been stuck. I might have died!  
**Marmee** It was awfully nice of you to come by.  
**Aunt March** Yes, it was, wasn't it?  
**Marmee** Well, Merry Christmas *(Signals girls to take up the greeting)*  
**Sisters** Yes, Merry Christmas, Aunt March, etc.  
**Meg** Won't you warm up by the fire?  
**Aunt March** Thank you, no. I have a fire at home— where I should be right now. I only came to bring you these cards. *(Handing cards out as each girl thanks her)* Meg... Jo...Beth... Beth? My stars! Where is she hiding?

**Beth** Right here, Aunt March.  
**Aunt March** Well, stop lurking and skulking about. My, but you've always been dreadfully shy. Come on out into the open, I always say. *(Handing card to Beth)* Here...

**Beth** Thank you Aunt March.  
**Aunt March** And, Amy...  
**Amy** Thank you, Aunt March.  
*(They open cards and gleefully find dollar bills inside)*

**Aunt March** Well, when I was a little girl, I went out and visited my aunts to wish them a Merry Christmas -- they didn't have to come to me! Now spend your money wisely.

**Marmee** We had planned to visit you tomorrow, Aunt March.  
**Aunt March** You never know if there will *be* a tomorrow. *(To girls)* Have you heard from that foolish father of yours? That ninny nephew of mine decides to waltz off to war, leaving others to take care of his family. My stars! It certainly isn't chaplains who are going to win this war— it's fighters!

**Jo** We're very proud of Father and you should be, too. And there's nobody having to take care of us.  
**Marmee** Jo.  
**Jo** We're able to look after ourselves.  
**Aunt March** Well, hoity-toity and highy-tighty! My stars!  
**Hannah** *(Entering with tea)* Some tea, Aunt March?  
**Aunt March** No! And if your father had listened to me, you'd be better off today. I begged him not to get involved helping that dreadfully inept friend of his, but he wouldn't take my advice. Well, it's just a waste of time trying to talk any sense into this topsy-turvy house. *(Beginning to exit)* Well, Merry Christmas.

**Sisters** Merry Christmas, Aunt March. Thank you for your gifts; good night, Auntie, etc. *(She walks down steps as Jo follows)*  
*(Marmee and other girls "freeze," silhouetted by glow of fireplace)*

**Jo** Aunt March...  
**Aunt March** Yes, Josephine? What is it?  
**Jo** Could we expand my hours working for you at your Plumfield Estate?  
**Aunt March** Fine time to ask me!  
**Jo** I'll work even harder to be a good companion.  
**Aunt March** A companion should be companionable!  
**Jo** I promise I will be. We need the extra money and I'd like to bury the hatchet.  
**Aunt March** Very well... After the holidays you'll start at nine o'clock. And bring an apron...  
**Jo** Thank you, Aunt March. Merry Christmas, Aunt March  
**Aunt March** Merry Christmas, Josephine. *(Exiting through audience muttering)* I hope it will be merry. But I doubt it...  
*(Jo rejoins her family. The Sisters and Marmee sing as if in two separate worlds)*

### **SONG: "JUST WAIT AND SEE" (Reprise)**

**Sisters** We are feeling rich as rich can be!  
*(Triumphantly, We'll have gifts this Christmas, wait and see!*  
*holding up their* When Aunt March gave us a dollar  
*dollar bills and* It just made us want to holler  
*parading about)* It's a dollar more than what we had before—  
A very merry Christmas is in store!  
*(Slower tempo)*

**Marmee** *(Singing* He'll be home next Christmas, wait and see...  
*reflectively, tenderly* Oh, dear God, please bring him home to me  
*holding her* I dare not even hope for it—  
*husband's letter)* It's getting hard to cope with it—  
Oh, Lord please keep him safe from any harm  
And keep him in Your Everlasting Arms...

**Sisters** *(Smiling, observing girls)* If only Papa saw our girls dreaming  
*(Oblivious)* Think of all the wondrous things we'll buy!  
**Marmee** He'd smile at our Little Women scheming...  
If only Papa could be at our side—  
*(Key change)*

I'll just have to wait, yes, wait and see  
But I pray, I pray that it may be  
Is it silly speculation or an idle expectation?  
I'm not sure, but this I know— I'll hope and pray—  
And trust the Lord until that day—!  
*(Music continues as underscore)*

*(Hannah is seen meeting a messenger who hands her a note)*  
**Meg** *(Dreamily, with sisters)* I can't wait! A new dress!  
**Jo** The new book I've wanted! And some writing paper for my journal!

**Beth** Some new sheet music!  
**Amy** The Faber's drawing pencils! Or, maybe it's time I tried oils...  
**Meg** Oh, Marmee! May we go to the General Store right now?  
**Marmee** *(Sympathetically)* You seem to have your hearts set on it. I don't see why not.  
*(The girls cheer)*

**Jo** The town won't know what's hit them when the March sisters march in!  
**Hannah** *(Handing the message to Marmee)* A message from poor Mrs. Hummel, ma'am. She wants to know if you might be able to come over and help look after her sick baby and the rest of the family.  
*(The Sisters quickly become sober and thoughtful)*  
**Marmee** *(Kindly)* Right away... Amy, my coat please. Girls would you get my other things?  
**Sisters** Yes, Marmee. We'll bundle you up nice and warm, etc. *(They help Marmee dress)*  
**Marmee** *(Kissing girls on their foreheads)* Good night, my children...  
**Sisters** Good night, Marmee  
**Marmee** Don't worry and don't wait up for me, my dears. It's all in God's hands. Everything will be all right...

**Sisters** Yes, Marmee. Good night, Marmee.  
**Marmee** Good night... *(She exits)*  
**Amy** *(Picking up Marmee's slippers)* I never noticed before... how worn out Marmee's slippers are.  
**Meg** She really must have a new pair.  
**Beth** I thought I'd get her some with my two dollars. *(This gets the sisters to thinking)*  
**Amy** No, I'll do it.  
**Meg** I'm the oldest.  
**Jo** Now that Father is away, I'll provide the slippers... seeing as how I'm the man of the family..  
*(The others snicker)* Well... at any rate, he told me to take special care of Mother while he was gone.

**Beth** I'll tell you what we can do. Let's all buy her something for Christmas and not get anything for ourselves.

**Jo** *(Patting her head)* That's like you, Beth. What shall we get?  
**Meg** I shall get her a pair of gloves.  
**Jo** A pair of new gray shoes. The best to be had!  
**Beth** Handkerchiefs— all hemmed with lace!  
**Amy** I'll get the slippers and a little bottle of Col-og-nee De Francassie.  
**Jo** *(Laughing)* You mean cologne, Professor?  
**Amy** Well, I'm sure that's what I said. She likes it and it won't cost much and I'm sure I'll have enough for the slippers and the col-og-nee--er--col--og--er-- the perfume.  
**Meg** How will we give her the things? She hates being fussed over.  
**Jo** We'll put them out over here by the tree, and bring her in, and watch her open the little bundles. Remember how we used to do it?

**Beth** It used to frighten me when it was my turn.  
**Meg** Oh! This will be a wonderful surprise. I'm so glad you thought of it, Beth...

### **SONG: "WE'RE SHARING OUR CHRISTMAS"**

**Beth** We're sharing our Christmas with someone we love  
In the spirit of heavenly giving from above  
**Sisters** *(As they collect and* We're thinking of Mother whom we may repay

*'pool' their dollar bills)* As we think of Another who came one Christmas Day  
*(Putting on their coats)* Immanuel!! "Our God is with us"  
Noel, noel! The Savior has come to help us  
We're sharing the Spirit of heaven above  
*(Exiting)* As we're caring, and sharing ourselves with those we love

### SCENE 3: THE HUMMEL HOME

*(Marmee greets the Hummel Family and holds their ailing child at side stage; Meanwhile in dim main stage lighting, the Sisters re-emerge through the audience with gifts they place under the Christmas tree of their living room)*

**Marmee** We're sharing our Christmas with someone we know  
When we're helping our neighbors, the joy of Christmas grows  
We're sharing the spirit of Heaven above  
As we're caring, and sharing ourselves with those we love  
Give me your tear, give me your sorrow  
Give me your fears; together we'll face tomorrow  
The Spirit of Christmas means thinking of you

**All** *(As sisters reenter)* And your kinship and friendship brings Christmas all year  
through.  
*(Musical interlude)*

*(Marmee hands the Hummels a medicine bottle and a note of currency and lovingly bids them good-bye as the sisters place Marmee's gifts at the foot of the Christmas tree. The sisters exit through upstage archway as Marmee makes her way "home.")*

### SCENE 4: THE MARCH FAMILY LIVING ROOM

*(Marmee sees the gifts at the tree as the Sisters peek out through archway, smiling. Marmee clutches slippers, hugging them to herself, turns and sees the Sisters, who merrily greet her and hug her. Marmee kisses each girl as:)*

*(Music crescendos)*  
*(Song resumes)*

**Marmee** Oh, Papa you're missing what I feared you would  
And I know that you'd be here if only you could  
And, oh, how I miss you -- but I am consoled  
I have four Little Women that I may have and hold  
Though skies are gray and filled with longing  
A bright new day of promise will soon be dawning  
The Spirit of Christmas is lighting our way  
With the hope of the Savior who came on Christmas Day...!  
*(Music continues as underscore; "O Little Town of Bethlehem")*

*(Black out)*

*(Lights up; brighter than in previous scenes)*

**Hannah** *(Walking in briskly with breakfast tray and greeting the Sisters who re-enter)* Merry Christmas, girls!

**Sisters** Merry Christmas, Hannah! Good morning, etc.

**Jo** *(Smelling food on tray)* Christopher Columbus! It's splendidly plummy!

**Meg** My, but that smells good!

**Beth** *(Carrying bedraggled doll)* Popovers! Oh!

**Amy** *(Wearing a clothes pin on her nose)* And coffee!... And muffins! And cream! And everything!

**Hannah** Merry Christmas!  
**Jo** I wish it was Christmas or New Year's all the time!  
**Meg** *(Kissing Hannah on the cheek)* Oh, Hannah, it's wonderful! Thank you!  
**Hannah** Don't know what all the fuss is about. *(Placing tray on a small table)* Used to be a time when I fed you a breakfast like this every day.  
**Beth** We must have been enormously rich! *(Tends to sad-looking doll)*  
**Amy** Tell me, Hannah. How was I dressed when we had all that money?  
**Hannah** In diapers.  
*(The girls laugh as Meg pulls out a pocket Bible and asks the others)*  
**Meg** Did you get what I got under my pillow?  
**Sisters** *(Pulling out pocket Bibles)* Oh, yes— beautiful little Bibles, etc.  
**Meg** Marmee calls it the best book ever written about the best life ever lived. I shall endeavor to read a little every morning.  
**Jo** I don't know which is dearer to me— the gift itself, or Marmee's inscription.  
*(General agreement)*  
**Amy** And I'm so glad mine is blue.  
*(The other girls look at each other with wonder)*  
**Jo** Why is that, professor? So the color will match your face when that clothes pin cuts off your air?  
*(The others laugh)*  
**Amy** I can't help it. *(To Jo)* You're the one who dropped me when I was a baby and caused my nose to be wide the way it is. Marmee doesn't care that I try to flatten it with a clothes pin. *(Amy begins to eat)*  
**Meg** Speaking of Marmee— let's wait for her before we eat breakfast, shall we?  
**Hannah** Your mother says "no." You're to have your breakfast and meet her at church.  
**Jo** Why? Where is she?  
**Hannah** One of the Hummels older children came over early this morning to say that some of the other children were getting sick. Your Ma went straight off to see what was needed. There never *was* such a woman for giving away food and drink and clothes and logs for the fire! She plum gave up her breakfast for that family...  
*(The Sisters fall silent and Beth steps aside)*  
**Meg** What's the matter, Beth?  
**Beth** *(Fingering her Bible)* I— I'm not hungry.  
**Meg** Oh, now Beth. People are starving everywhere, every day. If you let that worry you, you'll never eat at all.  
**Amy** *(Pertly piping up while stuffing her mouth with a muffin)* I just try not to think about it!  
**Jo** There are lots of people far away and out of reach whom we don't know. But the Hummel family lives near us... and we do know them. Maybe if everyone looked in their own neighborhood, there wouldn't be so many problems...  
*(The Sisters silently "stare down" the gobbling Amy who, with increasing discomfort, stops chewing, swallows and hands back the remainder of her muffin to Hannah)*  
**Amy** I have an idea! Let's give our breakfast to the Hummels!  
**Beth** That's the spirit, Amy! Let's get over there...  
**Hannah** Good girls, your mama would be proud...

## SCENE 5: ROAD AND GATE OF MARCH FAMILY HOME

### SONG: "THE BELLS OF CHRISTMAS" (Reprise)

**All** *(Sisters, townsfolk* Merry Christmas is in the air!  
*Laurie and John)* As they ring, Christmas bells declare  
**Laurie & John** Christmas joy and cheer is everywhere!  
**All** Christmas bells have a tale to tell  
May we hear them chime, may we hear them well!  
As they ring, may we hear their call

**Laurie & John**  
**All**

Let's have peace on earth and good will to all—  
Let's have peace on earth and good will to all!  
*(Townsfolk exit)* *(Music continues as underscore; "There's a Song in the Air")*

*(Jo and Meg bump into Laurie and John, respectively, dropping their food items)*

**Laurie**  
**Meg**

Oh, I beg your pardon! Please allow us to help. *(Joins John in picking items up)*  
*(Flustered)* Oh— er— thank you. Er— that seems to be everything. Thank you, again. Come along, Josephine...

**Jo**

*(As Meg and other sisters proceed ahead)* You live next door, don't you?

**Laurie**

Yes I do. My name is Theodore Laurence. And this is my tutor, John Brooke.

**Jo**

*(Shaking hands with both)* How do you do? I'm Jo March

**John**

Hello. Pleased to meet you.

*(The Sisters, somewhat uncomfortable, watch the conversation at a distance.)*

**Jo**

And I'd like you to meet my sisters...Meg...Beth—er—she's the one sort of hiding behind Meg... and that's Amy. *(The men kindly wave at the Sisters, who awkwardly curtsy. To Laurie)* We know all about you, Mr. Laurence. Oh my, yes! How you ran away to join the army and such. Why, I would have done the very same thing in your place! And I heard you were both in the same regiment, which is splendid.

**Laurie**

We're both flattered, I'm sure, Miss March.

**John**

My friend and student is not well however. He's still recovering from service.

**Laurie**

But I've been so cooped up. I just had to get out.

**John**

You really should get in. You still have a cold and it's chilly.

**Laurie**

*(Good naturedly, chagrined)* Yes, teacher...

**Meg**

*(Pulling Jo aside as the men confer)* Josephine!... Come

here!... What will they think?! Stopping to talk when

we haven't even met them properly!

**Jo**

You're not being very friendly. You haven't even said, "hello."

**Meg**

I don't like the way that young man has been staring at me.

**Jo**

Oh, Mr. Brooke? I hadn't noticed.

**Meg**

Well, I did. And -- *(gasping, glancing at men)*— and he's still looking!

**Jo**

Who?

**Meg**

Mr. Brooke!

**Jo**

*(Looking over at him)* Oh?

**Meg**

Don't look at him!...

**Beth & Amy**

*(Happily)* Marmee!

**Marmee**

*(Approaching)* Merry Christmas morning, my dearies! I've been looking for you at church. Why are you—?

**Beth**

We're taking breakfast to the Hummels.

**Marmee**

*(Hugging Beth and Amy)* Bless you! There is nothing to eat there and they're all huddled together for lack of a fire. You'll be a welcome sight indeed. Run along, now.

*(Meg, Beth and Amy exit as Marmee and Jo approach Laurie and John)*

**Marmee**

I see you've met our neighbors.

**Laurie**

Merry Christmas, Mrs. March.

**Marmee**

The same to you Mr. Laurence— Mr. Brooke, *(She extends hand to both.)*

**Laurie**

It's a pleasure to officially meet. My grandfather speaks so highly of you and your family.

**Marmee**

And it is widely known you have both distinguished yourselves serving our country.

**Jo**

Mr. Laurence needs to get in out of the cold.

**Marmee**

Indeed he must.

**John**

And I promised my cousins a Christmas visit.

**Laurie**

Must you go?

**John**

I'm afraid so.

**Laurie**

I'll be bored to tears with no one to talk with while I convalesce. *(To Jo)* I wonder, Miss March, if I may invite you in for a short visit.

**Jo**

May I, Marmee?

**Marmee**

Certainly. But don't be too long and wear out your welcome.

**John**

May I escort you home, Mrs. March? It's right on my way.

**Marmee**

I'd be delighted, Mr. Brooke.

**Laurie & Jo** Merry Christmas...  
**Marmee & John** (*Exiting*) Merry Christmas...  
**Laurie** I'm awfully glad you consented to visit with me— especially since we haven't met before...

**SONG: "I KNOW YOU"**

**Jo** (*Laurie*) I know you— (*Me?*) — yes, I do—  
I've seen you stare from over there  
A spy who sees my family!  
But we don't mind— you seem kind  
Don't be aghast, 'cause now at last  
We finally meet here in the street  
**Laurie** Forgive me for exploring, my life has been so boring  
I've been inclined to pass the time by staring and adoring—  
And what I've seen is peachy-keen!  
**Jo** My, you're bold  
**Laurie** So I'm told—  
And if I'm right we're both alike  
Yes, I would claim we're both the same  
**Jo** (*Coyly*) That may be...  
**Laurie** Wait and see...  
It takes a friend to know a friend  
And I contend we'll be good friends!

**SCENE 6: THE LAURENCE MANSION**

(*Leading Jo "inside"*) My visitors are seldom, so please come in, and welcome—  
(*Pouring tea*) And do join me for a cup of tea and spare me from my boredom  
I'm so blessed to have a guest!  
**Jo** (*Looking about*) It's so fine— how divine!  
(*agog*) A royal queen has never seen a paradise that's half as nice  
**Laurie** That may be, but I see  
At any price, it's twice as nice  
Because you're with me standing here  
(*Music continues as underscore*)

(*Jennings is seen in background, dusting and polishing furniture briefly*)  
**Jo** (*Awkwardly ignoring the compliment*) Christopher Columbus! What richness! Oh, it's just  
marvelous. Why, Theodore Laurence— you must be the happiest creature alive!  
**Laurie** It's just another room to me. And it doesn't necessarily bring happiness. (*Referring to sugar*)  
How many lumps?  
**Jo** One, please (*Remembering surroundings and indulging*) er— three. (*He adds sugar and hands her*  
*tea while Jo begins chattering*) Well Mr. Laurence— **do** tell me about yourself. Of course, I  
already know about your leaving school for the army. But before that— what?  
**Laurie** Well, I used to live in Europe with my family and— (*He eventually hands her a scone*)  
**Jo** Europe! I'm going to Europe some day, you know! You see, my Aunt March— whom I'm  
working for as a companion and helper— and, oh, what a nervous and fidgety soul she is too— a  
sour and dour dragon— well, anyway, my Aunt March has rheumatism and Doctor Anderson  
thought of baths. Not that she doesn't already have a bath. In fact, she has— a very nice one (*With*  
*mouth full*) But it's supposed to be thewapewtic— thewa— Er— therapy. For the rheumatism.  
European mineral water and all. And she might take me with her. Do you suppose baths would  
help your rheumatism?  
**Laurie** Er— I don't have rheumatism.

**Jo** Neither do I. But I might try them. Baths, that is. In Europe— since I'd be there anyway. And I think being there would help me immensely. My writing, that is. I've always wanted to go to Europe for my writing. It's such a wonderful place for writers! You see, my Aunt March— but you don't know my Aunt March, do you? Er— what were you going to say, Mr. Laurence?

**Laurie** I wasn't going to say anything— (*muttering to himself*)— not that I could have! (*Louder*) Anyway, I'm not Mr. Laurence. My friends call me Laurie.

**Jo** Well— Laurie. Very nice. Er— (*Looking at portrait of Grandfather Laurence*)— how are you getting along with your grandfather, Laurie?

**Laurie** Oh, fine. Er— that is, I'm still getting used to him. He's— er— ah—

**Jo** (*Ominously*) Yes, I know...

**Laurie** Isn't he a holy terror!?

**Jo** (*Laughing*) You should see my Aunt March! Ha!

**Laurie** (*Watching Jo devour scones*) I see you like scones.

**Jo** (*Suddenly self-conscious*) Oh— er— yes. They're delicious. I—er— missed breakfast and I— er— well, they're very good. Almost as good as the ones my sister Meg makes.

**Laurie** John Brooke and I were wondering— er—

**Jo** Wondering what? ...Er... Why would he be wondering something?

**Laurie** Well, he seems quite taken by your sister's beauty and was— er— wondering if there was anybody— er— anybody that your sister Meg liked?

**Jo** Did he ask you to find out?

**Laurie** Well— I— no— I—

**Jo** Well, you may tell him that we don't like anybody at our house. That is— we like a great many people, but— we don't like young men. That is, we like young men— er— some young men— certain young men— but— we don't like young men who wonder about who else we like. And Meg is too young and far too clever to bother about who may like her. It's ridiculous! That's all— ridiculous.

**Laurie** Speaking of ridiculous— you're on fire!

*(Mr. Laurence enters and eavesdrops, unseen by them)*

**Jo** (*Jumping away from the smoking fireplace*) What!?

**Laurie** Fire!

**Jo** (*Diving to floor, startled and screaming*) Ahhh!

*(Laurie whacks her back end with fireplace shovel to stamp out the "fire.")*

**Jo** Oh! How clumsy of me.

**Laurie** I'm sorry— I hope I haven't hurt you.

**Jo** No, it's all my fault. And this is the second dress I've managed to scorch this week! You see, I like to toast myself at the fire and I have the nasty habit of getting too close. I guess I'd better go home...

**Laurie** Oh, please don't go— it's dull as tombs here...

**Jo** Is that— is that why you stand at your window looking in at us?

**Laurie** It's rude of me, I know. And— er— bold, as you say. But you always seem to be having such a good time. When your lamps are lighted, it's like looking at a wonderful framed portrait, with each of you surrounding your mother the way you do.

**Jo** Where's your mother?

**Laurie** She died in Europe... shortly after my father.

**Jo** I'm sorry— truly I am. (*Brightening*) And I grant you official permission to look over at us anytime you'd like! In fact, you should visit us. Then you could be a part of our portrait. And Marmee is so truly plummy— er— wonderful.

**Laurie** Oh, I can see that. You're all wonderful... But— Grandfather might not approve. He's not always the most neighborly person since— er— since we lost some of our family and... he'd probably say I was imposing on you.

**Jo** Oh, fiddle-faddle! (*Re-examining portrait of Mr. Laurence*) Hmmmm... Well, he does look grim, all right. And his face has been known to frighten people now and then. But I can't imagine ever being afraid of him. Of course, whenever I've seen him, he's always barking at something or other. But somehow— I have to admit, I rather like him.

**Mr. Laurence** (*Startling them*) Thank you, ma'am!...And you think my face frighten people, eh?

**Jo** Yes... sir. Frankly, I do. I don't believe you *mean* to frighten people, but your face— er— well, you asked me, sir, and I've told you.

**Mr. Laurence** So you have... And I bark, do I?



**Jo** We've heard you bark, yes sir. Perhaps you don't bark all the time, but you do bark. Yes, sir.  
**Mr. Laurence** And...despite my frightful face... and baleful bark... you... still rather like me?  
**Jo** Yes. Yes, I do. In spite of everything, I really do.  
**Mr. Laurence** (*Laughing as if re-learning to do so*) And... I like you too... How refreshing you are!

*(Song resumes)*

**Jo** I like you— you like me  
 To my delight, you're quite all right  
 You are not what I thought you'd be!

**Mr. Laurence** I like you -- you like me  
**The Three** And we are three in harmony  
 And we're pleased as three can be!

**Mr. Laurence** (*As Jo & Laurie react*) I eavesdropped on your mocking  
 And found it rather shocking  
 And so I say I'll change my ways  
 From barking to more talking  
 Your advice has made me wise

**The Three** Now we're friends -- to the end  
 And we'll be good as neighbors should  
 Through friendship in our neighborhood

**Mr. Laurence** So point the way -- if I may  
 I'll make amends with my new friends  
 The change of heart has done me good!

**The Three** (*As Mr.L and Jo exit*) The change of heart has done-- us -- good ---!  
*(Music continues as underscore; transitions to "Auld Lang Syne:")*  
*(Music rises)*

*(Black out)*  
*(Lights up)*

## SCENE 7: THE MARCH FAMILY LIVING ROOM

### SONG: "A CALL TO THE BALL"

**Meg and Amy** (*Examining invitations as if royal decree*) We have a summons and an invitation to  
 The finest and the fairest local ball  
 Mister Laurence is hosting the neighborhood  
 And we shall heed his call to join the ball!...  
 A fine and fancy ball!

**Jo** (*Entering, frantic*) What fun! Come one and all!  
 I've got stains on both my gloves!  
 (*Beth enters with basket of sewing notions*) And I'm also thinking of:  
 The scorch on my dress is cause for distress -- a mess!

**Meg, Amy, Beth** (*"Sewing patch as Jo bends over on steps, rear to audience"*) We'll help, don't be a grump...  
 We'll patch, and sew your rump!  
 There's no need for you to stew  
 And you'll look as good as new --  
 At least just as good as you ever could as you!  
 Don't fuss about your truss --  
 Just keep your front to us;

*(Turning Jo to audience)*  
*(Lecturing, while continuing their "make-over" of Jo)*

*(Jo: "Oh?")*  
*(Jo: "All Right")*  
*(Jo: "Like what?")*

And one thing we'd like to add:  
 We'll be grateful and so glad  
 If you wouldn't say the slang that you say all day!  
 Tonight, don't fight and fuss  
 And watch what you discuss:  
 Don't say words like Columbus  
 To anyone but us

(Demonstrating) And walk with an air of style and flair, like thus.  
**Jo** (As Marmee appears) I shall do my very best to do the things that you suggest --  
 I'll try not to alarm you or annoy;  
 But I truly must confide that way down deep, deep here inside,  
 This Little Woman is a little boy!  
**M.M.A.B.** That's you -- the Jo we know!  
 But still we love you so --  
**Marmee** And whatever you may be, all my girls are dear to me,  
 And God has His thumb in what you'll become, you'll see...

**Jo** Oh! How I hate to be elegant!  
**Marmee** Oh, you look lovely, Jo -- just lovely!  
**Jo** Thank you, Marmee  
**Marmee** And Beth -- isn't she the pretty one?  
**Beth** Marmee -- do I really have to go? There'll be all those people --  
**Marmee** Oh, but it would hurt Mr. Laurences' and Laurie's feelings if  
 you stayed home. Besides, dear Beth, you must learn  
 to not be so afraid of people.

**Beth** All right Marmee, I'm sure your right.  
**Jo** Ouch! My feet hurt 'cause of these tight shoes, I have a  
 dozen pins sticking into my hair like a voodoo doll,  
 and a big fat patch right square in the middle of my --  
**Meg** Why don't you have your gloves on?  
**Jo** They'll only complete my dreadful appearance since they're  
 covered with lemonade stains. I can't wear them.

**Amy** (Aghast) Ahh! But you must! You can tell a lady by her gloves.  
**Jo** Not this lady.  
**Amy** Barehanded?! But you must wear them! You can't dance  
 without them. Anyone knows that.

**Jo** What's the use of dancing when I have to keep my back to  
 the wall all night?  
**Meg** (Handing her a glove) Here. At least wear one of my nice  
 ones and carry one of your ruined ones.

**Jo** Well...all right...  
**Marmee** Good girls. That's the way.  
**Meg** Please don't stretch it. Your hands are bigger than mine.  
**Jo** Yes, ma'am. Anything else?  
**Meg** Well, since you asked, remember not to stain it, and don't  
 put your hands behind you, and don't stare, and don't  
 eat too much, and don't use slang words like "plummy,"  
 and --

**Jo** Don't worry. I'll be as prim as can be.  
**Marmee** Have you a nice pocket handkerchief?  
**Jo** Oh yes, a plummy one! I mean, it's very nice. Honestly,  
 Marmee, I think you'd ask us about our  
 handkerchiefs if we were running from an earthquake.

**Meg** (Hugging Marmee) Be sure to keep your backside out of sight, Jo.  
**Jo** Oh, I just know I'll forget -- if you see me doing anything  
 wrong, just remind me with a wink, won't you?

**Amy** (Whispering to Beth) We'll be winking and blinking 'til our  
 eyeballs fall out!

**Aunt March** (Entering scene) So here you are! My stars, I thought you  
 had abandoned me. I've been looking everywhere for  
 you...

**Jo** You told us to wait at our door for your carriage!  
**Aunt March** Oh yes, I decided you all needed a brisk walk. I had my man park my carriage over at the  
 Laurence mansion.  
**Marmee** So glad to see you Aunt March, shall we walk then?

**Aunt March** I suppose but, I'm sure you'll be as appalled as I was...the party is full of boys and girls dancing and mooning at each other...it's ridiculous!

### SCENE 8: THE LAURENCE MANSION

**Townfolk/All** *(As Mr. Laurence and Laurie greet and shake hands with assembly)* *(Song resumes)*  
A fine and fancy ball!  
What fun, come one and all!  
We are dressed and duly pressed in our very Sunday best  
With friendship and cheer, we're glad to be here as guests!

**Mr. Laurence** I welcome everyone...  
**Townfolk/All** We're glad that we could come!  
*(Mr. Laurence moves toward and greets March family)* Mr. Laurence's request to be here at his behest  
Is kind as can be and we all agree, we're blessed!  
We're pleased as can be and we all agree we're blessed!  
*(Music segues; building to the following song)*

**Mr. Laurence** *(To assembly)* As a new year dawns, we often think of new beginnings. I have enjoyed a new beginning with my dear next door neighbors. And now I'd like to be the neighbor I haven't been in recent years by inviting each one of you to be at home and enjoy the evening. Let us renew our friendships. Let us enjoy laughter, good cheer, music and dancing! Enjoy...enjoy!...  
*(Music rises)*  
*(As the following is sung, Laurie is reluctantly grabbed by Katy for the dance. Jo darts about the couple, trying to catch Laurie's attention, provoking a flurry of furious winks from Amy and Beth, who stand on sidelines. John Brooke seeks Meg and they dance. Aunt March converses with Marmee, who watches Meg with admiration)*

### **SONG: "NEW YEAR'S WALTZ"**

*(Introductory waltz interlude)*

**Townfolk**  
Ohhh -- Oh, what a night to have a dance!  
And it just might lead to romance;  
Give me your hand and I'll hold you tight  
As we sashay in the candlelight;  
Join me, my love, this night divine,  
I shall be yours and you'll be mine  
As long as you're near, we'll salute the New Year  
With our gratitude and our good cheer!

*(The first part of the song is sung at full volume to set up some action but, from this point the volume is greatly decreased so the dialogue below can start and be heard over top of this song.)*

On this last night of December  
There's nothing I'd rather do  
A wonderful night to remember  
Dancing, romancing with you -- with you --  
Join me, my love, this night divine,  
I shall be yours and you'll be mine  
As long as your near, we'll salute the New Year  
With our gratitude and our good cheer!

*(Music continues as underscore, with this theme*

*You"*

*alternating with waltz renditions of "I Know and "Just Wait and See")*

**Amy** *(Amy and Beth are near a decorative screen, which Beth uses to hide herself)*  
Goodness! Jo is in-corrig-able! Just plain in-corrig-able!  
*(Noticing Beth staring off)* What's the matter Beth?  
*(Mr. Laurence approaches and eavesdrops)*

**Beth** That's the most beautiful piano I have ever beheld. And such beautiful sound! Close your eyes Amy and it's like you are in heaven.

**Amy** Oh. Yes, it is lovely...but not as lovely as Meg dancing over there. She's still dancing with Laurie's tutor -- John Brooke.

**Beth** She must be fairly dizzy from dancing by now.

**Amy** Oh, you don't get dizzy looking straight into your partner's eyes.

**Beth** Why not?

**Amy** Because the experience is intoxicatingly incom-pair-able and you don't notice anything else.

**Beth** Oh dear.

**Amy** That's what I've heard, anyway.

**Mr. Laurence** Now, now, what have we here? Who's hiding beauty behind a screen?

**Amy** Hello Mr. Laurence. I'm Amy March and this is *(Beth pulls on her dress to stop her from revealing her identity.)* Oh -- er -- no one -- in particular, sir.

**Mr. Laurence** But why aren't you dancing?

**Amy** Mother thinks we're too young for dancing. And, besides, I'd rather keep company with my sister.

**Mr. Laurence** Oh?

**Amy** That is...if she were here.

**Mr. Laurence** But -- she can't see anything from here. Er -- if she were here.

**Amy** Oh, she doesn't want to see anything. She just wants to hear the music...if she were here.

**Mr. Laurence** Well -- if she were here -- she should come on out so she could hear it better and enjoy it! Er -- *(Winking at Amy)* -- what's the matter?

**Amy** She has an infirmity.

**Mr. Laurence** Ohhh.

**Amy** She's shy.

**Mr. Laurence** Ohhh, I see, I see.

**Amy** If it weren't for that, she'd be simply fastidious -- she's an accomplished artist and plays the piano beautifully. Er -- if she were here I'd love to personally extend that invitation.

**Mr. Laurence** Well, well! She really ought to come over here and play my piano some time. Er -- if she were here.

**Amy** Oh, she'd never do that. She doesn't play for people... just for herself.

**Mr. Laurence** Oh, I wouldn't dream of imposing by listening to her, oh my, no. It's just that my piano is going to ruin from lack of use. I was hoping I could find someone to play it -- to practice on it, just to keep it in tune. It would be a great service and a personal favor to me. But, of course... if nobody cares about it, well then...never mind...

**Beth** *(After a pause; peeking out)* Oh, somebody cares. Very, very much.

**Mr. Laurence** *(Beaming triumphantly)* Aha! So you're the musical young lady. I didn't realize you heard what I was saying.

**Beth** I heard, sir. I'm Beth. And I'll come help your piano -- if no one will hear me and be disturbed.

**Mr. Laurence** Not at all! Not at all! Come any time. *(To Amy)* And you too. And tell your mother that I think all her daughters are simply -- er -- fastidious and -- intoxicatingly in-com-pair-able! *(He turns to walk away to greet others but, is stopped by Beth's words.)*

**Beth** Mr. Laurence... *(He turns.)* Thank you, *(beat)* thank you very much, Sir!

**Amy** Oh, Beth! Isn't he perfectionary?

**Laurie** *(To Jo, standing against wall)* At long last I'm free. Won't you please dance with me?

**Jo** Oh, ah --er -- I'm afraid I can't just now.

**Laurie** What's the matter? Don't you like to dance?

**Jo** Oh, yes. It's just that I -- er -- I -- well --

**Laurie** What is it?

**Jo** Well fiddlesticks! *(Turning, bending and pointing)* This! That's what!

**Laurie** *(Laughing)* Oh, that. Well, I have an idea. *(Takes her arm)* Let's go over here where no one will see you -- where you -- er -- where you can put your best foot forward. *(They dance happily in area where Amy and Beth are watching, hidden behind screen and giggling)*

*(Music reaches climax and concludes, immediately resuming waltz tempo)*

*(Assembly applauds music, resumes dancing)*

**Jo** *(Noticing Amy and Beth applauding her dance with Laurie)* Christopher Columbus! We've been discovered. And I haven't kept my patched behind out of sight as I said I would.

**Laurie** (*In good humor*) Ahh, well, perhaps a couple of cups of punch will bribe those who would spy on us not to tell our secrets. Would you like some punch?

**Amy** Ohhh! That sounds delect-ably delicious!

**Laurie** Very well, then. (*Jo follows Laurie to get punch as they encounter the Gardiners*)

**Jo** (*To Mrs. Gardiner and Sally*) Oh, hello Sally. And good evening, Mrs. Gardiner. Isn't it a wonderful ball?

**Mrs. Gardiner** (*Ignoring Jo; speaking to Laurie*) Laurie, my dear boy...have you met my Sally?

**Laurie** Indeed I have, ma'am. Many times. Excuse us, please... (*Takes Jo to get punch*)

**Mrs. Gardiner** (*Now standing with Sally near another stuffy gossip positioned by the screened Amy and Beth*) Well! How rude! That's what comes of his running around with that Josephine March, eh Mrs. Moffat?

**Mrs. Moffat** I suppose she's set a trap for him!

**Mrs. Gardiner** Well, what can we expect with four girls in the family -- all of them poor?

**Mrs. Moffat** One of them has to marry into money since they no longer have any of their own.

**Mrs. Gardiner** I'm sure the elder Mr. Laurence will have something to say about that. I'm sure he has other ideas for the boy.

**Mrs. Moffat** Of course, it would be a spectacular triumph for Mrs. March.

**Mrs. Gardiner** I must say -- she seems to be managing the affair very well.

**Mrs. Moffat** Indeed...indeed... (*They walk to another area*)  
*(Beth is shocked by this gossip and bursts into tears. Amy consoles her)*  
*(Returning with Laurie and holding punch)* Beth -- Amy -- what's the matter?

**Jo** I'm afraid we've had a bit of a shock just now.

**Amy** Look, Beth -- I brought you the best punch you've ever had. Do try it...

**Laurie** Please --- I want to go home.

**Beth** What happened, Mouse?

**Jo** It's best if we don't talk about it just now. She really wants to go home...

**Amy** Then perhaps we'd better go. Laurie, will you tell my family?

**Jo** Of course...

**Laurie** (*To Marmee in opposite area*) Now, just because I'm here, it doesn't mean I approve of all this reckless cavorting! And I've even heard some of the younger ladies are wearing fewer than four petticoats under those dresses -- which are getting skimpier every year!

**Aunt March** (*Tactfully interrupting as Laurie approaches*) Aunt March, this is Laurie, grandson of our next door neighbor, Mr. Laurence, whom you already know.

**Marmee** Oh, so this is the fellow I've seen chatting up a storm with Josephine, eh?

**Aunt March** I'm very pleased to meet you.

**Laurie** (*As John and Meg approach*) And this is Laurie's tutor, Mr. Brooke.

**Marmee** Did you say "look?"

**Aunt March** No -- Brooke.

**John** It's nice to meet you Mr. Cook.

**Aunt March** I've had the great pleasure of meeting your nieces and now meeting you is a great honor.

**John** Thank you, Mr. Hook.

**Aunt March** (*Perturbed, but diplomatic*) Er, yes, well -- of course -- it's also been a special honor --

**John** (*Turning to Marmee*) -- to get to know you better this evening, Mrs. March.

**Marmee** Thank you, Mr. Brooke

**John** You are the sort of mother I have always wished to have.

**Marmee** Oh?

**John** My own mother died when I was a baby and my dream of a mother is the same as what your lovely daughters express in every action and reference to you.

**Marmee** Why, thank you Mr. Brooke.

**Aunt March** High praise, indeed, Mr. Mook.

**Marmee** They are dear girls.

**Laurie** Speaking of which, I'm sorry to interrupt -- but Jo and the young ladies asked me to fetch you Mrs. March. Beth doesn't seem to be well.

**Marmee** Oh, dear. Please excuse us. Good night... (*She walks toward the other girls*)

**Meg** (*Meaningfully*) Good night, Mr. Brooke. Thank you for a lovely evening...

**John** Good night, Miss March. I hope that --

**Aunt March** (*Interrupting*) Come along, Margaret. Good night, Mr. Shook...

**John** (*Cheerfully, with a bow*) Good night, Aunt Starch...

**John** That Margaret March is as kind and sweet as she is lovely.  
**Laurie** Really, the way you monopolized every dance with the girl and stared lovingly into her eyes all night why, I thought you were bored with her or trying to scare her away!  
**John** Laurie, I feel like she found me, or I found her, or maybe we found each other... Laurie?  
**Laurie** Yes.  
**John** I found her glove.  
**Laurie** You FOUND her glove?!  
**John** When we paused to get some lemonade, she left it on the bench... so I took it for safe keeping.  
**Laurie** For safekeeping?  
**John** Well, I wanted to return it to her at a.. a more convenient time.  
**Laurie** A more convenient time than right then and there. Alright John, you're the teacher... *(Under his breath)* and apparently I have a lot to learn about women.  
**John** Laurie, I believe, no I know I'm falling in love with her.  
**Laurie** No, I didn't have a clue....  
*(Black out)*  
*(Lights up)*

### SCENE 9: MARCH FAMILY HOME -- JO'S BEDROOM

*(The Sisters, in nightgowns, huddle around Jo on her bed; Beth is tearful; Amy wears clothes pin)*  
**Jo** So! Mrs. Gardiner and Mrs. Moffat have nothing better to do than gossip about us, eh?  
**Amy** I don't think we should tell Marmee.  
**Meg** It would only upset her. And besides, there's nothing she can do about it.  
**Jo** Ohhhh! Of all the false, rude, wicked, rotten, worthless lies I've ever heard, I --  
**Meg** Oh, now Jo. There's no sense in getting all fired up about it.  
**Jo** Well, we can keep it from Marmee! Let's vow never to tell her or anyone else what those cranky old busybodies said. Agreed? *(Raises right hand with others)*  
**Meg** Agreed.  
**Beth** Agreed.  
**Amy** Oh, that horrible Mrs. Gardiner -- insulting us all like that! *(Nibbling on cupcake)* And I didn't even get to have refreshments or drink my punch!  
**Jo** Stop thinking of your stomach and agree to our vow!  
**Amy** Agreed.  
**Marmee** *(Offstage)* Girls -- time for bed!...  
**Meg** *(Calling out)* Right away, Marmee!  
**Jo** *(To Beth)* Don't you fret about what you heard tonight, all right Mouse?  
**Beth** *(Hugging Jo)* All right, Jo. Good night.  
**Jo** Good night, Beth.  
**Meg** Good night.  
**Beth** *(Exiting with Amy and Meg)* Amy, someday you're going to have a lovely nose...  
**Amy** *(Exiting)* Yes...I know...

*(Music begins)*

**Marmee** *(Entering and tucking Jo in)* Good night dear.  
**Jo** Good night, Marmee...*(as Marmee is about to exit)* ...Marmee?...  
**Marmee** Yes, Jo?  
**Jo** You don't have any particular plans for us, do you?  
**Marmee** Plans?  
**Jo** You know -- like some mothers have for their daughters...like wanting us to marry rich men or something -- you know...plans.  
**Marmee** Why, yes Jo. I have a great many plans...My plans for all my daughters are whatever God chooses. I pray my daughters will, of course, be beautiful, accomplished, and good. I pray you'll lead useful, pleasant lives with as little sorrow as the Lord graciously sees fit to send. And, yes, dear Jo, I am ambitious for you all. But not to make a dash in the world; I want to see you make a difference for eternity, doing God's will. Money is certainly needful but, I'd rather see you all poor men's wives as long as you're happy, beloved, and contented.

**Jo** *(Tearfully hugging Marmee)* Oh, Marmee -- you're a dear to me. I've decided I'm just never going to get married -- never, never, never!

**Marmee** It's best to leave these things to God and time. Make this home happy, so you may be fit for a home of your own if it is offered to you ... and content here if it is not. And remember this -- mother is always ready to be your confidante, and father, your friend. Both of us trust, hope, and pray that our daughters -- whether married or single -- will be the pride and comfort of our lives.

**Jo** We will, Marmee. We will...

**SONG: "MARMEE'S LULLABY"**

**Marmee** Now, go to sleep, dear child -- all is serene;  
I'll ask the Lord to plant and to grant all your dreams;  
His kingdom come -- His will be done --  
He honors those who honor Him and overcome;  
Sleep well, my daughters dear -- all is serene;  
I'll ask the Lord to plant and to grant -- all -- your -- dreams.

*(Black out) (Music rises -- continues as underscore, eventually fading)*

**SCENE 10: ROAD AND GATE OF MARCH FAMILY HOME**

**Jo** *(Jo is pacing near a bench, reading aloud to herself from her own manuscript)*  
*(Dramatically, with feeling)* "...And still 'tis whispered that when the gondolas glide over the glistening river through the sparkling waters -- these same fabled waters still run crimson -- *(crying)* -- with the blood of fair Lady Ellen and her gallant love, Sir Robert -- both slain by the phantom hand..." The end. *(She collapses on the bench, weeping)*

**Beth** *(Walking by with sheet music, alarmed)* Why, Jo. What's the matter?

**Jo** *(Looking up, tearfully)* My story...

**Beth** Poor, poor Jo. Isn't it any good?

**Jo** *(Sobbing)* It's wonderful! ...

**Beth** Oh!

**Jo** *(Recovering, rising)* What are you up to Mouse?

**Beth** I just came from Mr. Laurence's

**Jo** Practicing on the piano again?

**Beth** I was going to, as I have every day -- but today -- there was no piano.

**Jo** Oh? How strange. Well, maybe he's having something done to it. I'm sure it's nothing.

**Beth** I pray he'll bring it back. I already miss it.

**Jo** I'm sure he will. Did you give him the slippers you made him? They sure were beautiful.

**Beth** Yes -- yesterday. He wasn't there, so I left them for him. I hope he likes them. I wanted him to see how much I appreciate his letting me use his lovely piano.

**Jo** I'm sure he's thrilled with his new slippers. It was very thoughtful of you.

**Beth** May I read your story, Jo? I love reading what you write.

**Jo** *(Handing her manuscript)* Sure, Mouse. *(Confidentially)* And, who knows? You just might see it in print.

**Beth** *(Excited)* Really?! Oh, I hope so! *(Sitting on bench)* Now I can't wait to read it! *(She becomes absorbed reading.)*

**Jo** *(Calling into audience)* Hey! What are you lurking around for?

**Laurie** *(Entering from audience)* Well -- er -- I do live next door, after all.

**Jo** If I didn't know any better, I'd say you were spying on me.

**Laurie** Er -- well -- since you brought it up -- and since we both like being honest with one another -- and since I have an insatiable curiosity -- I might mention that I saw you in town a short while ago ...

**Jo** Oh?

**Laurie** And I followed you -- just for fun, of course.

**Jo** Oh?

**Laurie** Er -- did you have a rough time?

**Jo** No, not really.

**Laurie** Well, you got finished pretty quickly.

**Jo** Yes, thank heavens.  
**Laurie** Why did you go there alone?  
**Jo** I really didn't want anyone to know.  
**Laurie** Hmmphf! You're about the oddest fellow I've ever met.  
**Jo** Well, thanks. You're pretty odd yourself.  
**Laurie** How many did you have out?  
**Jo** How many what did I have out?  
**Laurie** Teeth, of course.  
**Jo** *(Laughing)* Christopher Columbus! Is that where you thought I went -- the dentist?!  
**Laurie** Well, didn't you?  
**Jo** I went to the office above the dentist.  
**Laurie** Oh. Well -- what were you doing up there?  
**Jo** Secret...  
**Laurie** But I thought we weren't going to have any secrets from one another. That's a girl for you.  
**Jo** Fiddlesticks! I'm nothing of the sort. Besides, this is different.  
**Laurie** All right, then, keep your secret. I've got one too!  
**Jo** Ohh! Something plummy?!  
**Laurie** Something very plummy!

*(Music begins)*

**Jo** Hmmm ... Deal! *(Pulling check from pocket)* Here, see for yourself...  
**Laurie** *(Reading)* "Pay to Josephine March the sum of one dollar." Hmmm. For what?  
**Jo** Well... turn it over...  
**Laurie** *(Reading back of check)* "In full payment for her story entitled, 'The Phantom Hand.'"  
**Jo** What do you think of that?!  
**Laurie** Hmmm. One dollar...  
**Jo** Well, it isn't much, I know. But it's a start. And someday, it may be ten dollars!...  
**Laurie** *(Handing check back to Jo)* Jo, you sure beat all!  
**Jo** Don't you see?...It'll be in print and people will read it...people I don't even know. And it might make a difference in their lives.  
**Laurie** Well, that is something. At any rate, don't you want to know what my secret is?  
**Jo** Oh, yes! Do tell.  
**Laurie** I know where Meg's glove is.  
**Jo** *(Disappointed)* Is that your secret?  
**Laurie** Wait until you hear where it is.  
**Jo** Where?  
**Laurie** In a certain pocket.  
**Jo** Whose pocket?  
**Laurie** The pocket of my tutor, Mr. John Brooke.  
**Jo** What?  
**Laurie** I asked him if he might be thinking of popping the question one of these days and he admitted he would like to, but is afraid to. He's so poor and she's so young. Isn't it romantic?  
**Jo** No, it's horrid!  
**Laurie** I thought you'd be pleased.  
**Jo** At the thought of anyone coming to take Meg away? No, thank you. Imagine him!...Trying to break up my family!  
**Laurie** Oh, you'll feel differently, Jo, when someone falls in love with you...on a soft, spring day, with the sun setting through the trees... *(Moving closer)* ...and your lover's arm stealing around you --  
**Jo** Ha! I'd like to see someone try it!  
**Laurie** *(Moving closer)* Would you? *(As he moves in to hug her, Jo knocks him off balance and runs)* Hey!...*(He gets up to give chase)*  
*(Music rises, up tempo)*  
*(Chase ensues as Jo and Laurie run through audience. Beth remains oblivious)*  
**Laurie** I'll get you!  
**Jo** Oh, no you won't! You can't catch me!...  
**Laurie** Oh, yes I can!...*(Laurie trips back at front of audience and Jo, laughing, helps him up)*  
*(Music becomes subdued, eventually fades)*



**Laurie** I'd have caught you if I hadn't tripped there.  
**Jo** Sure! That's what they all say. Serves you right for telling me about Meg and John. Awful! Simply awful. And it's a good thing Meg doesn't know about it! She'd be furious! She's perfectly happy with the way things are. You'd better tell Mr. Brooke to keep away from us, or I'll let him know exactly what I think. He's a house wrecker, that's what he is and Meg would feel just -- *(Notices Meg and John approaching from audience, arm in arm)* --as -- I -- do --  
**John** Hello, Miss Jo. *(Jo gives him an icy stare)* Er -- well -- thank you for the afternoon, Meg.  
**Meg** Thank you, John. Paying visits has never been quite so much fun before.  
**John** I hope we can do it again soon...  
**Jo** *(Abruptly)* Good bye, Mr. Brooke. Come along, Meg...  
**Meg** Good bye, John.  
**John** Good bye, Meg. *(All look at each other awkwardly.)*  
**Laurie** Er -- well -- good bye, Jo. *(Receiving a cold stare from Jo)* Well -- what are you upset with me for?  
**Jo** Ohhhh...Men!... *(Pulls Meg away as Laurie and John walk off.)*  
**Meg** Jo! I've never been so embarrassed! I saw you running about with Laurie all through the street. When are you going to stop your rude, romping ways?  
**Jo** Not 'til I'm old and stiff and need a crutch! Don't try to make me grow up before my time. It's bad enough having you change all of a sudden.  
**Meg** I haven't changed. But it's time you had! Look at you -- no hairpins, no combs -- running about where anyone can see you!  
**Jo** I wish I was a horse...  
**Meg** *(Exasperated)* Ohhh --  
*(Meg stomps away toward and into March home, "freezing" with ensemble gathered "inside:")*

*(Music begins -- reflective, slow tempo renditions of "A Call to the Ball" building majestically)*

**Jo** *(Beginning to cry, going to Beth at bench)* Oh, Beth...  
**Beth** Are you all right, Jo?  
**Jo** Beth...promise me you'll never leave us...that you'll always be our Beth...  
**Meg** *(Running from home interior to Beth and Jo)* Beth! Beth! Come in ! There's a great surprise waiting for you! Come on, Jo! You'll want to see this too!...Hurry!...  
*(Music rises)*  
*(Lights up on)*

## SCENE 11: THE MARCH FAMILY LIVING ROOM/ROAD AND GATE

*(Meg places her hands over Beth's eyes and guides her up steps toward interior -- as Jo follows -- where Amy is hopping about with glee and Marmee and Hannah beam with excitement)*  
**Amy** Oh, Beth! You are home! Just wait 'til you see this! It's wonderful! Etc.  
**Beth** Oh, my!  
**Meg** You'll be so excited...  
**Amy** Hurry!  
**Meg** *(Positioning Beth in front of the Laurence piano, now in the March home)* Look!!  
*(Music crescendos)*  
*(Special light rises, illuminating piano)*  
**Beth** *(Stunned)* Is this... for me?  
**Marmee** Just for you, my precious. It was delivered after you went out.  
**Beth** *(Opening envelope and removing note)* Oh my... *(Handing note to Jo)* You read it, Jo ... I can't.  
*(Music transitions to reflective rendition of "I Know You:")*  
**Jo** *(Reading)* "Miss March ... Dear Madam..."  
*(All gasp)*  
**Amy** How elegant! I wish someone would write something like that to me!  
**Jo** *(Continuing)* "I have had...  
**Mr. L voice** "...many pairs of slippers in my life, but I never had any that suited me so well as yours. These beautiful slippers will always remind me of the gentle giver. I like to repay my debts; so I know you will allow an old gentleman to send you something which once belonged to the little granddaughter ... he lost. With hearty thanks and best wishes, I remain your..."

**Jo** (Continuing) "...grateful friend and humble servant...James Laurence."  
**Amy** Grateful friend and humble servant! Wait 'til the girls at school hear this!  
**Meg** Look at the cunning brackets to hold the candles -- and the pretty rack!  
**Jo** (To Beth) This is an honor to be proud of. Laurie told me how fond Mr. Laurence used to be of the child who died, and how he kept her little things so carefully. Just think -- he's given you her piano.  
**Hannah** Try it, honey. Let's hear the sound of this beautiful baby piano...  
*(Mr. Laurence, reading a newspaper with a cane on his arm, strolls leisurely through the audience)*  
**Beth** Before anything else...I must thank him...yes... *(Seeing him)* ...right now... *(Beth bounds down the steps as the others look on, stunned and amazed)*  
**Hannah** *(As Beth hesitates before the oblivious Mr. Laurence)* The piano seems to have turned her head! She's been so bashful --- why, she never would have gone to him so suddenly in her right mind...  
**Mr. Laurence** *(Looking up from paper, noticing Beth, and bending to her)* Hello Beth, I hope you received ...  
**Beth** *(Interrupting.)* Oh, Mr. Laurence I want to... I need to *(Hugging him suddenly, with deep affection, and tearfully kisses his cheek)* Thank you, sir...I thank you with all of my heart.  
**Mr. Laurence** Why child it was nothing...  
**Beth** No, Sir, it was the world to me. *(Hugging him again.)* May I please play you a song?  
**Mr. Laurence** I'd like that. *(They walk into the house.)*  
*(A messenger hands a telegram to Hannah and exits.)*  
**Hannah** *(Looking at paper)* Oh, no! *(Handing telegram to Marmee as if it might explode)* It's one of those horrid telegraph things, ma'am...  
*(Music becomes dramatic, eventually fading)*  
**Marmee** *(Reading, then with profoundly affected countenance)* GIRLS! GIRLS!...Your Father!...  
**Mr. Laurence** *(To Beth, leading her back to others "inside:")* This sounds serious...  
**Meg** Marmee! What is it?  
**Marmee** Oh, no...*(She drops telegram and nearly collapses, caught by Hannah and Mr. Laurence)* Ohhh...  
**Sisters** *(Surrounding Marmee, helping her to chair)* Marmee!...  
*(Exclamations of "Oh!", "What's the matter?" "Are you all right?" "What about Father?" Etc.)*  
**Meg** *(Picking up telegram)* Jo -- I can't bear to read it. *(Hands it to Jo)*  
**Jo** *(Reading)* "Your husband is very ill."  
**Amy and Beth** Marmee!  
**Jo** *(Continuing)* Come at once. S. Hale. Federal Hospital. Washington.  
**Marmee** *(Stretching out arms to her girls)* I must go -- I must go at once. It may be too late.  
**Sisters** Oh. Marmee...  
**Mr. Laurence** I'll be right back...*(Exits)*  
**Hannah** *(Looking heavenward)* Oh, Lord help us -- and help that dear man. *(To others)* God will do His part. Now we've got to do ours. There's no time for crying.  
**Marmee** *(Rallying)* You're right, Hannah  
**Hannah** We've got to get your things ready...*(She exits.)*  
**Sisters** But Marmee...  
**Marmee** Be calm, girls, and let Mother think...Jo, get me a pencil and paper.  
**Jo** Yes, ma'am. *(She brings Marmee the items and Marmee begins scribbling.)*  
**Laurie** *(Entering)* Grandfather just told me...Please -- what may I do?  
**Marmee** Send a telegram saying I'll come at once. The next train leaves at six o'clock, I think. I'll take that one.  
**Laurie** What else? The horses are ready. I can go anywhere -- do anything.  
**Marmee** *(Handing him a note she has written)* Give this note to our Aunt March, please. *(Takes his hand)*  
Now, go dear -- and be careful -- don't hurt yourself driving those horses at a desperate pace.  
**Laurie** Yes, ma'am. *(He exits.)*  
**Jo** Mother -- did you ask that crotchety old dragon for money?  
**Marmee** Jo -- I had to. I haven't got five dollars in my purse.  
**Jo** When I was there this morning, her rheumatism was as bad as ever, and she's sure to refuse.  
**Marmee** *(With quiet confidence)* Father needs me and some way will be provided. *(Writing on paper)* I cannot think Aunt March would refuse at a time like this.  
**Jo** You have more faith in her than I have. She always croaks if you ask for anything. *(She thinks to herself)* Er -- Marmee -- hadn't I better go over to the hospital where you volunteer and tell them you won't be available for a while?

**Marmee** Oh, yes dear -- thank you. That's on my list. And Jo, if you would, stop at the mercantile and get these things on account. (Jo grabs bonnet and cloak, then exits.) Amy -- tell Hannah to bring down our good trunk. (*Amy exits.*) Beth -- run over and ask Mr. Laurence for a bottle or two of old wine. I'm not to proud to beg for Father. Oh, and would you check on the Hummels and their baby for me?

**Beth** Yes, Marmee. (*Beth takes her shawl and exits.*)

**Marmee** And Meg -- please help me find my things, for I'm half bewildered.

**Meg** Marmee! You come over here and sit by the fire. We'll all take care of everything. You need the rest for your trip. (*She helps Marmee sit at fireplace.*) Hannah and Amy and I will make sure you have what you need.

**Mr. Laurence** (*Laden with items, to Marmee*) Well, my dear madam, I am deeply grieved by your impending ordeal, but we shall hope for the best -- and pray, I assure you.

**Marmee** That is all we may do, sir.

**Mr. Laurence** (*Handing over various items to Hannah and Marmee, with Meg and Amy packing them in the trunk*) This is the wine you did me the honor to ask for, madam. And here is some old peach brandy, which may prove useful.

**Marmee** Oh, thank you, Mr. Laurence. You are so kind.

**Mr. Laurence** Don't mention it, dear lady. And, as I have a beautiful new pair of slippers, bestowed by a lovely young benefactor, I offer my former warm slippers -- not elegant, but comfortable, I assure you... (*All teary, moved by his generosity. This response in turn, moves him.*)

**Marmee** Mr. Laurence -- you are so thoughtful. I don't know how to thank you.

**Mr. Laurence** Please don't try, madam. (*Noticing John approaching*) Ahh -- our Family tutor has arrived. I hope you don't mind -- er --

**Marmee** Certainly not, but --

**Mr. Laurence** Oh, I'll let him explain what we have in mind.

**John** (*Entering*) I'm very sorry to hear of all this, Mrs. March. Mr. Laurence has some business for me to attend to in Washington, so I have come to offer myself as an escort for your journey.

**Mr. Laurence** It's such a long and difficult journey for a woman alone.

**Marmee** Oh, thank you. Thank you, both!

**Mr. Laurence** Come along then, John. I'll help get your things... (*Exits.*)

**John** Yes, sir. (*Meg follows John "out" as others pantomime talking and action of packing*)

**Meg** How kind you both are to us. And it will be such a comfort to know Marmee has you to take care of her. Thank you very, very much. (*John takes her hand and is about to kiss Meg when he is interrupted.*)

**Aunt March** (*From and walking through the audience*) My stars! What is going on there?! (*Peering through her glasses*) Hm-mm -- (*to John*) -- oh, it's you. Mr. Stream, isn't it?

**John** Brooke. John Brooke.

**Aunt March** Well, Mr. Rook, it's time Margaret got in out of the cold!  
(*Pulls Meg up steps.*)  
(*John shrugs his shoulders in good humor and exits with a chuckle.*)

**Aunt March** (*To all assembled*) Oh, my knee!... So -- what's all this I hear? March sick in Washington? Serves him right, serves him right! I always said it was absurd to go into the army and perhaps next time he'll take my advice!

**Meg** Father did what he thought was right, Aunt March.

**Marmee** Won't you sit down, Aunt March?

**Aunt March** There's no time for that! When you see my nephew, ask him what he means by going off to war, getting sick, and then expecting me to pull him out of the hole. And where's Josephine? She's rapidly becoming the only practical one in this family and that's not saying much.

**Meg** She went out on some errands for Mother.

**Aunt March** Aha! Gadding about with that rattle-brained Laurence boy, I'll wager!

**Marmee** (*Quiet, but firm*) Jo is not with Laurie, Aunt March.

**Aunt March** So much the better. Oh, my knee. I'll never sleep tonight. Tell Josephine to come to read to me later tonight. Well, I hope for good news about my nephew, but don't expect it. He never had much stamina. Good night. (*Reaching into her purse*) Ahh. (*Handing bills and a check to Marmee*) Here's the twenty-five you asked for, and a check for fifty more. Oh, I know there are plenty of bills to pay. (*Leaving abruptly*) Good night. (*Exits.*)

**Meg** Oh, Marmee! I was afraid she wasn't going to help you at all.

**Marmee** I had a feeling she would. Deep down she has a kind heart but doesn't know how to show it!

**Amy** She was a whirling toronto!

**Meg** Oh, Amy -- if you mean a tornado, why don't you say so?

**Amy** *(Seeing Jo appear through hallway)* Jo! You're back!

**Hannah** *(Still pacing and fussing with trunk)* You missed the thrill of Aunt March's cheerful visit.

**Jo** I saw her come out the front, so I dodged through the garden in back. I knew she wouldn't give us anything but her crotchety croaking, and from her face, I guess you got a large dose of that! Well, we're independent of her at any rate, Marmee and -- *(handing money to Marmee)* -- well here's my contribution toward making Father comfortable and bringing him home.

**Marmee** My dear Jo! Where did you get *this*? Twenty-five dollars! Jo -- I hope you haven't done anything rash.

**Jo** No -- it's mine, honestly. I didn't beg, borrow or steal it. I only sold what was my own.  
*(She removes her hat, showing hair bobbed short as possible -- general outcry)*

**Marmee** Your hair! Your beautiful hair!

**Meg** Oh, Jo -- how could you?

**Beth** *(Entering)* Jo!...*(Touching her hair)* What have you done?

**Meg** *(Stunned)* She sold her beautiful hair...

**Jo** Oh, now, it doesn't affect the fate of the nation, so let's not wail about it. It's good for my vanity. I was getting too proud of my mop.

**Laurie** *(Entering, followed by Mr. Laurence and John Brooke, and noticing Jo)* Christopher Columbus!! Jo, what the dickens have you done? You look like a porcupine!

**Jo** *(Somewhat hurt, but brave)* Oh, really? I feel deliciously light and cool.

**Marmee** *(Tenderly)* Jo, dear... your hair will grow back...and it will be as lovely as ever...But you'll never be more beautiful...than you are right now. *(She kisses Jo.)*  
*(Music begins: Marmee's Lullaby)*

**Meg** I like it.

**Beth** So do I.

**Hannah** *(Tearfully)* So do I.

**Amy** So do I! It's strangely becoming.

**Mr. Laurence** Indeed it is! *(Checking pocket watch)* Time to go, Madam  
*(Laurie and John lift up trunk in preparation to exit.)*

**Marmee** Girls, I leave you to Hannah's care and Mr. Laurence's protection. Don't grieve and fret, but go on with your work as usual. Hope and keep busy. *(Kissing each girl in turn)* Meg dear, be prudent; watch over your sisters. Be patient, Jo. God will give you forbearance. Beth, dear, comfort yourself with your music. Amy, help all you can and be obedient.

**Sisters** *(Ad lib)* Good bye Marmee -- we love you, etc.

**Hannah** *(Hugging Marmee)* You'll be in our prayers...

**SONG: "MARMEE'S LULLABY" (Reprise)**

**Marmee** God bless and keep you all, my little lambs  
I'll pray each day for you and I place you in God's hands.  
*(Music continues as underscore)*

**Marmee** God bless and keep us all...*(Exits with Mr. Laurence, Laurie and John.)*

**Jo** *(Giving out a little sob)* Oh...

**Meg** *(Tenderly)* Jo, dear, what is it?

**Jo** *(Trying to stifle her emotions)* I was just having a private little moan, that's all.

**Meg** Are you crying about Father?

**Jo** No, not now.

**Meg** What then?

**Jo** *(Crying)* It's -- it's my -- my hair!!

**Meg** You poor dear. *(Hugs Jo.)*

**Beth** *(Listless)* I'm -- I'm going to -- miss -- miss -- Marmee so --

**Amy** Beth? Are you all right?

**Beth** I -- I feel -- kind of -- *(She collapses)*

**Sisters** *(Ad libbing)* Beth! What's wrong? Oh no! Etc. *(They surround and prop her up.)*

**Meg** She's burning up with a fever! Oh, Beth...

**Beth** It -- it must be -- from the Hummels baby. The doctor said -- said it was -- scarlet fever.

**Amy**  
**Hannah**  
**Jo**

Oh no!  
I'll fetch Doctor Anderson! (*Exits.*)  
Don't worry, Mouse. You'll be all right...What would Marmee do?...She'd pray, wouldn't she?...Oh God-- please help us -- Please help Beth...

**Jo**

(*Song resumes*)  
Thy kingdom come -- Thy will be done --  
Please touch my sister, Lord, and help her overcome;  
We need your help, dear Lord, please see us through;  
Our lives are in Your hands and we're trusting -- in  
You--

(*Slow black out*)

(*Music rises to crescendo.*)

**End of ACT I**

WifeHawne  
T.H.E.A.T.E.R

## ACT II

### Entr'acte

**Jo's Voice** *(Near end of Entr'acte, Jo's voice is heard just before lights come up)*  
We united ourselves as sisters in our single-minded resolve to help Beth get better and to make Marmee and Papa proud of us in their absence. We hoped by day and prayed by night for dear Beth, for Papa, and of course, our beloved Marmee. By and by, with Hannah's care, my sisters' help, and the doctor's advice, Beth showed some improvement -- and by God's grace, we made the best of troubled times. To help chase away the boredom of the long winter days we would often gather to sing at Beth's piano and act out snippets from my own writings. We named ourselves the "Pick Wick Club" something I borrowed from my hero Charles Dickens. We were feeling a bit too old for such foolishness but, there is something strangely comforting about routine in the climate of loneliness and uncertainty.

### SCENE 1: MARCH FAMILY HOME -- ATTIC (PICKWICK CLUB)

*(While the above is being read the girls, in dim light, are singing around the piano, and then begin to put on their "PickWick" costumes and act out a scene.)*

**Meg** *(Officially referring to document)* Our first order of business is to hear a progress report from our Club physicians as to the status of the health of our dear Pickwick Club member, Miss Beth March.

**Jo** I am pleased to report, Madam President, that the cheeks of Miss Beth March are indeed a shade rosier than they were this time last week.

**Meg** Excellent news.

**Amy** She's doing well con-vel-ecking. *(She picks up a bedraggled doll.)*

**Meg** Perhaps Miss Amy is hinting that Miss Beth is doing well convalescing.

**Amy** That's what I said.

**Meg** I know I speak for every Club member when I say to Miss Beth: welcome back!

**Beth** Thank you, Madam President.

**Meg** Moving on.

**Jo** Here, here! *(They applaud Beth.)* And now Madam President, if I may...I wish to propose the admission of a new member...one who deserves the honor, would be grateful for it, and would add immensely to the spirit and good humor of the club. I propose Mr. Theodore Laurence as an honorary member of the Pickwick Club.

**Meg** Laurie?

**Jo** Come now -- do have him.

**Meg** Well, we'll put it to a vote. All in favor of this motion, please say "aye."

**Jo** *(Boldly)* Aye!

**Beth** *(Timidly)* Aye!

**Meg** Those opposed?

**Meg and Amy** No!

**Amy** *(Addressing others)* We don't wish any boys. This is a ladies club and we wish it to be private and proper.

**Meg** As for me; I'm afraid he'll just laugh at us. We're getting a bit old for this as it is and --

**Jo** Oh, fiddlesticks! It's our own social club and we can do whatever we want with it for as long as we want and we can keep on meeting 'til we're as old as Aunt March!

**Amy** That long?!

**Jo** Anyway, I give you my word as a gentleman that Laurie won't make fun of us. Besides, he loves lively discussions and debates and he'll bring a certain tone to our deliberations.

**Beth** *(In the midst of murmurs, rising)* Yes, we ought to do it, even if we are afraid. I say he may come, and his grandpa too, if he likes.

**Jo** *(Shaking Beth's hand)* Aha! Now then, let's vote again. Everybody remember it's our Laurie, and say 'aye.'

**The Others** Aye!

**Jo** Good. Bless you! Well, since there's no time like the present— allow me to present our new member! *(Throws open trunk.)*

**Laurie** *(Popping out of trunk)* Hello, everyone!

**Meg** *(Shocked)* Jo, how could you! You rascals!

**Amy** You traitor! You rogue! You conspira-tater!

**Laurie** Now, now! *(Refers to Jo)* My faithful friend and noble patron -- who has so flatteringly presented me, is not to be blamed for the base stratagem of this moment. I planned it and she gave in and, on my honor, henceforth, I shall devote myself to the interests of this immortal club! For being a club member is a dream come true!

**Jo** I wish all our dreams came true.

**Laurie** Ha! I have so many, I can't decide where to begin.

**Meg** Which is your favorite dream -- your best "castle in the air?"

**Laurie** I'll tell mine if you'll each tell yours.

**Meg** *(Looking at others, who nod)* Agreed.

**Laurie** *(To Beth)* Even our sweet little invalid?

**Beth** Don't be such a tease, Laurie. I'll be well soon.

**Laurie** *(Takes her hand apologetically)* I was sure of that, or I'd never have said what I did.

**Jo** Go ahead with your dream, Laurie.

**Laurie** Well -- after I'd seen as much of the world as I want to, I'd like to settle in Germany and have as much music as I choose. I'm to be a famous musician myself -- and all creation is to rush to see me. Ha ha! That's my favorite "castle in the air." What's yours, Meg?

**Meg** Oh -- I should like to have a lovely house full of all sorts of luxurious things -- nice furniture, pretty clothes, good food, pleasant people -- and heaps of money. I am to be the mistress of it and manage it as I like, with plenty of servants so I never need work. I wouldn't be idle, but would do good -- and make everyone love me dearly! That's my dream.

**Jo** Haven't you forgotten something? Why don't you say you'd have a splendid, wise husband and angelic, little children? You know your castle wouldn't be complete without them!

**Meg** And I suppose you'd have nothing but horses, ink stands, paper and novels in yours.

**Jo** Wouldn't I though! I'd have a stable full of Arabian steeds; rooms full of books and I'd write on magic paper so all my books would be as famous as Laurie's music. I want to do something heroic or wonderful that won't be forgotten after I'm gone...I don't know what. And I shall write books and get rich and famous. That's my favorite dream. What about you, Mouse?

**Beth** *(Quietly)* Mine is to get well. And to stay at home with Father and Mother and help take care of the family. I only wish we may all keep well and be together -- nothing else. *(Jo takes Beth's hand and pats it.)*

**Laurie** And you Amy?

**Amy** I have so many -- but my pet is to go to Rome, become an artist, and do fine pictures, and be the best artist in the whole world!

**Laurie** *(Laughing)* We're a fine lot, aren't we? All of us wanting to be rich and famous. I wonder if any of us will get our wishes...

**Jo** Ten years from now -- if we can -- let's meet and see how many of us get our wishes.

**Laurie** I hope I've done something to be proud of by then. But I'm such a lazy dog. I'm afraid I'll dawdle, Jo.

**Jo** You need a motive, as Mother says. And when you get it, she says you'll do great things. *(Noticing Beth, who has been crying)* Why, Beth...What's the matter, Mouse?

**Beth** *(Tearfully)* I'm sorry -- it's just that -- all this talk of time passing and dreams coming true reminded me of Marmee and Father -- and how much I miss them.

**Jo** *(Feeling Beth's forehead)* Poor dear...and you seem a little flushed...

**Beth** I just want to see Marmee and Papa...

**Jo** *(Joining Beth in tears)* I know, Mouse...I know...

**Laurie** *(Trying to be cheerful)* There, now...what kind of club is this? *(Wiping the girls' tears with handkerchief)* I don't remember anything about tears in the bylaws. *(The girls slowly remove their "moustaches" and other club trappings.)*

**Jo** It's just that we've been without Marmee and Father so long. And she doesn't even know how sick Beth has been and -- *(Resumes crying)* -- oh, Marmee...Papa...

**Laurie** Now, don't fret. Marmee and Father will be home soon...

**Jo** I don't see how...

**Laurie** *(Sounding officious)* Ahem! If I may have the floor, Madam President, allow me to present one final agenda item...

**SONG: “JUST WAIT AND SEE” (Reprise)**

**Laurie** I just hope you won't be cross with me,  
But I've taken quite a liberty:  
You've been four unhappy lambs and so  
I sent some telegrams to go and summon your beloved family  
They'll be back here any moment, wait and see!

**Jo** *(Excited)* Our parents will be back here any minute!

**Laurie** Mister Brooke has put them on the train

**Jo** If there's a prize for thoughtfulness, you'll win it!

**Laurie** “Thoughtfulness” is just my middle name!

**SCENE 2: THE MARCH FAMILY LIVING ROOM / ROAD AND GATE**

**Hannah** *(Running in, excited)* Come here, Meg and Amy, Jo and Mouse!  
*(As the sisters and Laurie run in)* Here they come! They're walking toward the house!  
When I saw them down the road, I thought I'd just about explode  
It is a shock and what a wondrous sight to see!  
And I'm just about as happy as can be!

**All** *(As all unite to meet family members)* And we're just about as happy -- as -- can --be --!  
*(Music crescendos, continuing as reflective underscore)*

*(The Sisters, Hannah and Laurie hug, kiss and swarm around Marmee, Father and John. There are cries of “Father, you're back! Marmee -- how are you?!” Etc.)*

**Father** Jo, my boy, how are you? Meg, my darling -- how you've grown! Amy, my sweetheart. And last, but not least, my little Mouse! So, you were jealous of your Father's illness and had to go and get sick yourself, eh?

**Meg** How was the trip home?

**Father** Fine -- fine -- *(Refers to John)* -- thanks to our friend here.

**John** Your Father was a brave soldier all the way. I know you have so much to say to one another, so I'll take Laurie along with me.

**Father** *(To Laurie)* How are you, my boy? I didn't see you there...

**Laurie** I don't blame you sir, with such wonderful daughters to greet you. I'll see you soon, sir, and hope your good health will return. *(He exits with Brooke.)*

**Father** *(As they leave)* Thank you -- thank you both.

**Jo** Isn't it wonderful to have them back? *(Hugging Marmee)* It seems an age since you went away.

**Father** It's been a pretty long road.

**Jo** But, we've got you back. *(She hugs him.)*

**Father** I believe our burdens, with God's help, will tumble off our backs very soon. *(To Meg)* Here's an answer to prayer already. *(Taking her hand)* I remember a time when this hand was white and smooth and your first care was to keep it so. It was very pretty then, but to me it is much prettier now -- for in these apparent blemishes I read a little history. A sacrificial offering has been made to vanity. This hardened palm has earned something better than blisters -- and I'm sure the sewing done by these pricked fingers will last a long time. I'm proud to shake this good, industrious hand and hope I shall not soon be asked to give it away... *(He hugs her.)*

**Beth** Please say something nice about Jo. She has been so very, very good to me.



**Father** In spite of the shorter hair -- I don't see the son Jo, whom I left many months ago -- I see a young lady who pins her collar straight and laces her boots neatly. Her face is perhaps a little more thin and pale with anxiety -- but I love looking at it, for it has grown gentle. I know I shall miss my wild young girl, but I'll get a strong yet tenderhearted woman in her place. I don't know whether the shearing sobered our "black sheep." but I do know that in all Washington I could not find anything more beautiful than you to be bought with the five and twenty dollars which my good girl sent to me...

**Jo** *(Tearfully)* Thank you, Father. I've been trying to be your son, but I feel like crying all the same!...  
*(The others laugh gently.)*

**Amy** Now Beth, Father.  
**Father** *(Arms about Beth's shoulders)* There is so little of her, I'm afraid to say much for fear she'll slip away all together -- though I can already tell she is not so shy as she used to be. *(She hugs him closely)* I've got you safe, my Beth, and I'll keep you so, please God.

**Beth** I'm so glad you're back, Father.  
**Father** *(Crossing to Amy)* Amy -- you may be the last, but certainly not the least. And I'm so pleased to see you content to be last and wait on others. And as you grow older, I know you'll refine your character just as you refine your beautiful drawings and artwork. I'm so proud of my lovable daughter with a talent for making life beautiful to her herself and others...

**Marmee** Now, girls, I think it's best that we take Father to his room.  
**Father** Perhaps that would be best.  
**Hannah** I'll help with your things. Oh, it's so good to have you home!  
**Father** *(As all but Jo and Marmee escort him off)* Thank you, Hannah. God has indeed been gracious.  
*(Music fades)*

**Jo** *(Pulling Marmee aside)* Oh, Marmee -- I'm so pleased that you're back. But I'm a little worried about something.

**Marmee** Let me guess. Meg?  
**Jo** *(Surprised)* How did you know?  
**Marmee** *(Teasingly mysterious)* Marmee knows all things. Now, what's troubling you?  
**Jo** Oh, it's a little thing -- but it pesters me.  
**Marmee** Tell me, dear.  
**Jo** Last New Year's Eve Meg left her glove over at the Laurences. We forgot all about it until Laurie told me Mr. Brooke had it...and confided to Laurie that he liked Meg but didn't dare say so -- she was so young and he so poor, Now, isn't that a dreadful state of things?!

**Marmee** Do you think Meg cares for him?  
**Jo** *(Turning away appalled)* Mercy no! Of course, I don't know anything about love and such nonsense. In novels, the girls show it by -- *(demonstrates)* -- staring and blushing and fainting away and acting like fools. Now, Meg does nothing of the sort. She eats and drinks and sleeps like a sensible creature. She looks straight in my face when I talk about that man and only blushes a little when Laurie jokes about them.

**Marmee** Then you suppose that Meg is not interested in John?  
**Jo** *(Surprised)* Who?  
**Marmee** Oh -- Mr. Brooke. We call him John now. We fell into it at the hospital.  
**Jo** *(Horrorified)* Just like Meg. Oh, dear. Now you'll take his side. He's been good to Father and you won't send him away, but let Meg marry him if she wants to -- why, a fine thing! He weaseled his way into that trip just to wheedle you into liking him!

**Marmee** Now, dear, don't get angry about it. John was so devoted to Father that we couldn't help getting fond of him. He was perfectly open and honorable about Meg -- for he told us her loved her -- but would earn a comfortable home before he asked her to marry him.

**Jo** Humph! Just like him!  
**Marmee** He only wanted our permission to love her and to work for her -- and to help her love him, if she could.

**Jo** Oh, I knew it! I knew there was mischief brewing! And now it's worse than I thought. I just wish I could marry Meg myself and keep her safe in the family! I hate to see things going all crisscross when a pull here and a snip there would straighten it out. I wish wearing flatirons on our heads would keep us from growing up. But I guess buds will be roses and kittens will be cats and it's just too bad!

**Father** *(Entering)* What's this I hear about flatirons and cats, Jo?  
**Jo** Only one of my silly speeches, Father. Weren't you able to rest?

**Father** Well, I started to lay down, but I guess I'm too happy and excited to be home...and truth to tell, I'm concerned about our Beth. She seems a little weak yet.

**Amy** *(Bounding in with ice skates)* I'm going skating with Laurie, Marmee. We'll stop at the post, Father, for the mail and a newspaper.

**Father** Good idea, thank you.

**Marmee** Now, don't be late for dinner, Amy.

**Amy** No, Marmee. You know I try to be punctilious! Bye! *(Exits as others exchange smiling glances in reaction to her use of big words.)*

**Marmee** I'd better see how Hannah's coming along. She may need a hand. *(Exits)*

**Father** *(Sitting, peeling an apple)* How goes the writing, my daughter?

**Jo** *(Fingering a pen)* Oh, Father -- sometimes I get discouraged, tear up pages and pages and sometimes -- *(laughing)* -- it seems as if genius burns. I've been writing a lot of short stories and -- well, I'm hoping to surprise you with good results soon.

**Father** Oh? What kind of surprise?

**Jo** Well, if I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise.

**Father** *(Laughing)* True enough.

**Jo** But I do hope to use my writing to help contribute financially around here. If I sell any more hair I'm liable to be known as Chaplain March's unfortunate bald-headed daughter.

**Father** *(Laughing)* Now, Jo. There's more to life than money.

**Jo** *(Patting his hand)* I know, Plato. You sound just like Marmee.

**Father** Speaking of money, is Aunt March as trying and amusing as ever?

**Jo** *(Laughing)* She gets worse and worse and funnier and funnier.

**Father** What's the latest wrinkle?

**Jo** Oh, nothing new...washing the poodle and reading. Belsham's poetry. Father, when I think of the good times she might have and doesn't, I don't envy her with all her wealth.

**Father** You're right, Jo. But at least you have Uncle March's old library to browse in and that must be some consolation.

**Jo** Oh, yes -- and that reminds me, Father -- such an interesting man has been there -- a Professor Friedrich Bhaer. Aunt March lets him borrow books.

**Father** *(Animated)* Really! The Professor Bhaer who has translated the Bible and Shakespeare into German?

**Jo** You know of him?

**Father** He's well known in literary circles and I've read of him. When his sister was dying, he gave up his career and came over here to take care of his two little orphan nephews, whom he is educating in this country.

**Jo** I wonder why he doesn't educate them in Germany?

**Father** Their father was an American and it was their mother's last request that her sons be brought up here in the States. So Professor Bhaer adopted not only the boys, but also their country, as his own.

**Jo** What a fine thing to do.

**Father** Indeed. What is he like?

**Jo** Well...as I've gotten to know him...I find him quite unique in appearance and manner.

**Father** *(Laughing)* Don't worry, my dear! All your secrets are safe with your papa.

**Mr. Laurence** *(Appearing from audience)* Hello, there! Welcome back, March!

**Father** Good day, Mr. Laurence.

**Mr. Laurence** I trust you're feeling better.

**Mr. March** I am. Steady improvement, thanks to you and your prayers -- and all your kind help. And now that I'm finally home, I expect my family will be the best remedy of all.

**Mr. Laurence** Indeed. And my little friend Beth? How is she faring?

**Mr. March** Well, she's still frail, but we're hoping she'll improve with the coming of spring.

**Mr. Laurence** That is indeed my prayer as well. Miss Jo, have you seen that harum-scarum grandson of mine? What mischief is he up to now?

**Jo** He's out skating with Amy, sir. Don't worry about Laurie, Mr. Laurence. He'll turn out all right.

**Mr. Laurence** Well, he ought to after all the kindness you show him over here.

**Jo** Well, Marmee has always told us: "Cast your bread upon the waters, and after many days it will come back -- buttered!" *(All laugh)*

**Mr. Laurence** *(Amused)* Just don't spoil the lad. *(Seeing Beth helped in by Marmee, Meg and Hannah)* Ahh! My dear Miss Beth... *(The others help her into a chair and make her comfortable near the fireplace)*

**Meg** You see, Mr. Laurence, that Beth comes with a royal retinue.

**Mr. Laurence** As she should, our little queen. (*He kisses Beth's hand*) We must soon get you out into the sunshine, my child. (*Marmee takes his arm and motions to a chair*)

**Marmee** Sit here Mr. Laurence. Beth always looks forward to her daily visit with you, sir.

**Mr. Laurence** (*Sitting*) Thank you, madam. (*Opening a book*) I have a dandy story for you today...

**Laurie** (*Running in from audience with Amy, hollering and laughing*) Yipee! Hurrah! Extra! Extra! Read all about it!...Big news! Big news!...Hurrah!...

**Amy** A local authoress has just become famous!

**Laurie** Yes, a writer right here in our fair city has been recently published.

**Amy** National recognition!!

**Laurie** Now isn't this a plummy bit of news?! The sensation of the season!  
(*All are excited*)

**Jo** (*Finally grabbing newspaper from Laurie*) Oh! "The Spread Eagle." Oh, Laurie! I know I sold it, but did they -- did they really --?

**Laurie** It's all there! With a pleasing illustration of a villain and viper and --

**Amy** And your name at the bottom -- Miss Josephine March! (*Hugs all around.*)

**Laurie** Hurrah for "The Spread Eagle" and the newest celebrated American authoress!

**Father** Is this the surprise you spoke of, Jo?

**Jo** Yes, Father. But no one is more surprised than I am! I dared not hope for it. Marmee -- Marmee -- my story's printed! (*Hugs Marmee, who beams*)

**Laurie** Isn't it fine to see it all in print -- and aren't we proud?! (*He shocks Hannah with a kiss.*)

**Father** Let's see it, my daughter. (*Jo hands it to him and he skims through it.*)

**Beth** I knew it! I knew it! Oh, my Jo! I'm so happy and proud!

**Amy** Now tell us about it! Did Father know? Or Mother?

**Meg** How did you ever dare try?

**Amy** How much did you get for it?

**Jo** Oh, stop jabbering and I'll tell you. Actually, Laurie caught me at it --

**Laurie** In town! Caught her red-handed. She mustered up the courage to go to the publisher's office up above the dentist.

**Jo** They bought it and later asked for five longer stories. They said if they printed the first one I could expect them to publish them all!

**Laurie** The only catch was, they wanted her to take out the morals of the stories.

**Father & M.** (*Disappointed*) Oh --!

**Laurie** Well, let's face it. People don't want to be preached at nowadays. I guess morals don't sell papers.

**Marmee** What next?!

**Laurie** Anyway, when we saw the story in the paper, we dropped by the publisher, And here's your check for the stories. (*Hands her check.*) Fifty dollars!

**Jo** Fifty dollars! Oh, and I can write reams and reams of 'em. I can't do much with my hands, but I'll put my head to work and make a living out of this topsy-turvy world!

**Father** Well, congratulations, Jo. I can see it's a fine story. But we both know what's truly in your heart. Don't let them short those morals you like to put in and never mind the money.

**Jo** You're right, Father.

**Amy** I think the money is the nicest part of it! Fancy earning fifty dollars all by yourself. Whatever will you do with such a fortune?

**Jo** That's easy -- send Beth and Mother to the seashore.

**Beth** Oh, how wonderful!...Oh, Jo. I can't do it. It would be so -- so selfish.

**Jo** Oh, but you must go. I've set my heart on it. It's what I've been working toward and why I've succeeded. I never get anywhere when I think of only myself and it helped me to work for you -- don't you see?

**Meg** Marmee needs to go after nursing two invalids -- and she won't go without you, Beth.

**Marmee** Beth dear, let Jo spend her first earnings in her own way.

**Beth** It's such a beautiful way. Just like my Jo!

**Marmee** We all want to hear Jo's story, I know.

**Hannah** Oh, yes.

**Mr. Laurence** Indeed, we do.

**Marmee** Father, are you too tired to read it aloud for us?

**Father** I don't feel a bit weary with all these devoted nurses! Suppose we go into the study where the light is better...  
(*All but Jo, Meg and Laurie exit.*)

**Mr. Laurence** *(Exiting)* My sincerest congratulations, Miss Jo.

**Jo** Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Laurence** *(Bowing grandly to Amy)* You first, my lady...  
*(They exit.)*

**Laurie** I've got to run across with these letters for ol' Brooke. *(To Meg)* Er...you know... **John** Brooke.  
*(Playfully)* You did remember him when he came home with your parents, didn't you, Meg?

**Meg** *(On to him)* He did seem vaguely familiar somehow... *(Laurie laughs and exits.)*

**Jo** *(To self)* I'm going to keep spinning stories like a spider. I'll take care of the whole family!  
*(Laurie poses outside "window" in the manner Meg describes)*

**Meg** *(Looking out window)* Oh, that Laurie! There he is kneeling and pretending to be John...Now he's wringing tears out of his handkerchief, pining away for me. He's just a silly goose!  
*(Laurie laughs and exits through the audience.)*

**Jo** He's only showing you what your John feels. Touching, isn't it?

**Meg** Please don't say "my John." It isn't proper or true. Don't plague me, Jo, please. I've told you I don't care much for him, so let's all just carry on as we always have.

**Jo** Well, I wish it was settled. So, if you intend to go through with it, get it over with.

**Meg** I shouldn't do anything until he says something -- and he won't -- because Father says I'm too young.

**Jo** Well, if he did say something to you, you wouldn't know what to say.

**Meg** I do too! I've planned just what I'd say. I want to be prepared.

**Jo** Oh? Do you mind telling me what you'd say?

**Meg** Not at all. You're old enough to be my confidante and my experience may prove useful to you in your own situation of this kind.

**Jo** I don't intend to have a situation of this kind! I'd rather be an old maid and paddle my own canoe. So what are you going to tell him?

**Meg** I'll simply say -- calmly and firmly -- "Thank you, Mr. Brooke. You are very kind, but I agree with Father that I am too young to be engaged at present. So please say no more, and let us remain friends."

**Jo** Humph! That's stiff and cool enough. I don't think you'll ever say it, though. And if he goes on like the rejected lovers in books, you'll cave in for sure.

**Meg** No, I won't. I'll tell him my mind is made up and I'll walk out of the room with dignity.  
*(Demonstrates her dignified exit and is startled to hear following)*

**John** *(Entering from audience)* Anybody home? Hello!...

**Jo** *(Sarcastic)* Aha! Ha,Ha!...Good day, Mr. Brooke! Back so soon?

**John** Hello, I --er --came back to --er --get my umbrella. Er, that is to see if your Father is all right.

**Jo** *(Very sarcastic)* It's very well. He's in the rack. I'll get him and tell it you are here! *(Exits)*

*(Music begins -- "Margaret March" theme transitions to "Aunt March March: ")*

**Meg** *(Awkwardly)* Er -- well, I'm sure Mother would like to see you. Er -- please sit down and I'll -- er --go get her.

**John** Please don't go. Are you afraid of me, Meg?

**Meg** Oh, no. How can I be afraid when you have done so much for Father -- and been so kind to Mother? I only wish I could thank you for it.

**John** *(Taking her hand)* Shall I show you how?

**Meg** *(Trying to withdraw, turning her head away)* Oh, no, please don't. I'd rather not.

**John** *(Gently, kindly)* I only want to know if you care for me a little, Meg... I love you.

**Meg** *(Almost in tears)* I -- I don't know.

**John** Will you try to find out? I want to know so much. My heart isn't in anything I'm doing until I know whether we may be together or not.

**Meg** I'm -- I'm too young.

**John** I'll wait. And in the meantime, you could be learning to like me. Would it be such a hard lesson, Meg?

**Meg** Not if I choose to learn.

**John** Please choose to learn. I love to teach -- and this is so much easier than teaching Laurie Italian.  
*(He smiles at her)*

**Meg** *(Slowly drawing away)* I -- I -- I'm sorry...I don't choose. Please -- let me be.

**John** Do you really mean that?

**Meg** Yes. Yes I do. I -- I don't want to be worried about such things. Father says I needn't. It's too soon and I'd rather not.

**John** May I at least hope you'll change your mind...in time?

**Meg** I -- I --

**Aunt March** *(From audience)* Yoo hoo! Where is everybody?!... I heard my harebrained nephew is home!

**Meg** *(Terrified)* Aunt March! *(Whisking John off)* Quick! Over here...

**Aunt March** *(Entering scene, catching glimpse of John)* My stars! What's going on?... Where did everyone go?...

**SONG: "THE AUNT MARCH MARCH" (Reprise)**

**Aunt March** When you come it's quite canny how the family is gone --  
It's as if they all departed in a whirl!  
*(Snooping about house peering over glasses)* And I thought I saw a gentleman a-carrying on,  
Which I think is most unseemly for a girl!  
I'm fit to spit, so out with it, and tell me where he is  
'Cause if anyone should get the blame,  
The blame should all be his;  
*(Swinging her cane)* So tell me now, my dear, just who was standing here  
And I will hold him, scold him, without fear!!  
*(Music continues as underscore)*

**Meg** Er -- well -- it was only Father's friends. I'm surprised to see you!

**Aunt March** *(Grimly)* That's evident. What's "Father's friend" been saying to you that's made you blush?

**Meg** Er -- blush? Me?

**Aunt March** There's something fishy afoot. And I want to know what it is.

**Meg** Er -- we were only talking. Mr. Brooke came for -- er -- his umbrella and --

**Aunt March** Mr. Nook?! That Laurence boy's tutor? Aha!! I understand now. The whole town knows he's been mooning after you and I certainly hope you haven't gone and accepted any proposal.

**Meg** Shah! He'll hear you! ER -- would you like me to get Mother for you?

**Aunt March** Don't change the subject. Tell me, do you intend to marry this Mr. Crook?

**Meg** Brooke.

**Aunt March** If you do, not one penny of my money goes to you. Remember that.

**Meg** I -- I shall marry whom I please, Aunt March, and you can leave your money to anyone you like!

**Aunt March** Well!...Is that the way you take my advice, Miss? You'll be sorry when you're out of money and living in a shack.

**Meg** It can't be worse than what some people have rolling around in big, hollow mansions.

**Aunt March** Now, Meg, my dear, be reasonable and take my advice. I don't want you to spoil your whole life by making a mistake at the beginning. You ought to marry well and help your family. It's your duty to make a rich match.

**Meg** Father and Mother don't think so -- they like John -- even though he is poor.

**Aunt March** Your parents, my dear, have no more worldly wisdom than two babies.

**Meg** And I'm glad.

**Aunt March** This Mr. Schnook --

**Meg** Brooke!

**Aunt March** Is poor and hasn't got any rich relatives, has he?

**Meg** No, but he has many warm friends.

**Aunt March** Humph! You can't live on friends! Does he have a business?

**Meg** He's a fine teacher. And Mr. Laurence is going to help him.

**Aunt March** That won't last long. So you're going to marry a man without money, position, or business and go on working harder than you do now when you might be more comfortable all your days by minding me and doing better, eh? I thought you had more sense...

*(Song resumes)*

**Aunt March** When you're destitute and starving and you're miserably poor  
*(As John peeks out )* Don't come crawling on your knees to visit me!  
When you're on the streets and homeless