

**JO**

There! Across the road!

**BETH**

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

**AMY**

You'll go to prison for it!

**JO**

*(SHE exits with an exaggerated flourish)*

Prison? What care I for prison?

*(The GIRLS rush to the window to watch her as the scene segues to THE MARCH  
PARLOR: #1)*

**#3a – Transition To March Parlor**

**BETH**

Jo is an incredible human being.

**MEG**

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

**AMY**

He looks sinister.

**BETH**

I think he looks sad.

**AMY**

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

**BETH**

Has anyone ever been inside?

**AMY**

He'd never let any of us in.

**MEG**

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

**AMY**

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

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

**MARMEE**

What criminal sister?

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



**BETH & MEG**

**AMY**

Marmee!

Marmee, you're home!

**MARMEE**

(Seeing them all in parts of costumes)

What's happening here?

**MEG**

Jo's written an Operatic Tragedy.

**AMY**

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

**BETH**

And I'm the mother in it.

**MEG**

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

**AMY**

And I play Clarissa, who's very sweet.

**MARMEE**

It sounds wonderful!

**BETH**

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

**AMY**

Tell us about your day.

**MARMEE**

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

**AMY**

(shouts)

A letter from father!

**MEG**

Read it to us, Marmee!

**MARMEE**

Where's Jo?

**BETH**

She's outside.

AMY

Read the letter, Marmee!

MARMEE

We'll wait for Jo.

AMY

She may be hours.

MARMEE

I want to hear all the things you did today.

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

BETH

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

AMY

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

MEG

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

JO

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

Rodrigo has returned!

MARMEE

Jo!

JO

*(surprised)*

Marmee!

MARMEE

Where did you get that tree?

JO

I borrowed it from Mr. Laurence.

MARMEE

Jo! You didn't -

JO

*(passionate)*

I took it for us, Marmee!

MARMEE

*(coming right in)*

You'll take it back immediately.

**JO**

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

**AMY**

Do let us keep it.

**MEG**

It's Christmas, Marmee.

**MARMEE**

No. Destroying someone else's property - ?

**BETH**

*(coming right in)*

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

**MARMEE**

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

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

**MR. LAURENCE**

What about him?

**MEG**

*(surprised)*

Mr. Laurence?

**MR. LAURENCE**

Yes, Mr. Laurence!

*(To Jo)*

You!

**JO**

Me?

**MR. LAURENCE**

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

**JO**

I'll make it up to you, sir.

**MR. LAURENCE**

With what?

**JO**

I'll plant six more.

**MR. LAURENCE**

Twelve!

**JO**

And I'll chop your firewood for a few days.

**MR. LAURENCE**

Weeks! And I hope such an incident never happens again. You've ruined my day!

*(HE goes. THEY all see LAURIE, a boy of 16, who has remained behind, reticent, but wanting to say something)*

**LAURIE**

He loves his trees. I'm Theodore Laurence the Third. But everyone calls me Laurie. I've come to live here. In Concord. I play the piccolo. I can sleep standing up. And I won a medal at school for holding my breath nearly three minutes before passing out.

*(To Jo)*

I think that was terrifically daring of you chopping down Grandfather's tree. Well, goodbye.

*(HE starts to leave)*

**JO**

*(calling after him)*

Theodore Laurence the Third! Would you mind delivering this tree to the Hummels?

**MARMEE**

Jo!

**LAURIE**

I don't mind at all.

**JO**

He doesn't mind.

**LAURIE**

Just point me in the direction.

**JO**

They live half a mile down the road. The red house with the broken shingles.

**LAURIE**

*(Taking up the tree)*

Merry Christmas!

*(HE goes.)*

**AMY**

Merry Christmas!

**MARMEE**

↓ Jo, you must think before you act on every whim.

**JO**

I just want us all to have a wonderful Christmas.

**MEG**

*(to Jo with urgency)*

A letter's come from father.

**JO**

*(explodes with excitement)*

Christopher Columbus!

**BETH**

Do read the letter, Marmee.

#3b - Letter Underscore

**MARMEE**

*(The GIRLS quickly gather around her)*

'My dear wife: The war goes on and on. The end seems nowhere in sight. The days are difficult and long. But I am well.'

**AMY**

He's well.

**MARMEE**

Still it's very lonely away from my dear ones. Especially lonely as Christmas is approaching. Each night in my tent, I think of my precious girls.'

**AMY**

He thinks of us.

**MARMEE**

'Give them all my love. And give them a sweet kiss. Tell them to be good girls. Faithful and hard working. And to conquer that which is disagreeable in them -'

*(SHE sneaks a look at Jo)*

'- so that when I return, I'll be fonder and prouder than ever of my little women.'

*(SHE looks at her girls, who suddenly look sad. SHE gets up)*

Why are we looking so glum? Do we have an Operatic Tragedy to perform or not?