

10 EXT./INT. BOARDING HOUSE DRAWING ROOM. NYC. WINTER. DAY. 10  
1868.

Jo reading and walking at the same time, bounding two-at-a-time up the steps of a large brownstone boarding house. She stoops to pick up a cat who suns herself on the steps.

JO  
(to the cat)  
My Beth would like you very much.

As Jo walks through the house, into the drawing room, she lets the cat down, and goes straight to the fireplace. She stands with her back to it, to warm herself, and produces a small notebook and begins to write.

She is so engrossed with her writing that she doesn't hear the boisterous group of college students and professors, men and a few women, when they descend upon the room. She just keeps writing, until:

FRIEDRICH (O.S.)  
Good afternoon, Miss March.

Jo looks up from her notebook to see **Friedrich Bhaer** looking down at her. He speaks with a German accent, and, like all Europeans, seems to know something that we Americans don't:

JO  
(she straightens up)  
Good afternoon, Professor.

FRIEDRICH  
You're on fire.

JO  
What?

FRIEDRICH  
(suddenly animated)  
You're on fire!

All of the sudden Jo notices that the back of her dress has caught on fire. In a panic, another woman of the group helps her and the dress is put out.

Disaster is avoided, although not humiliation.

FRIEDRICH (CONT'D)  
(laughing)  
I have the same habit, you see?

He shows her scorch marks on his jacket. Jo laughs. **MRS. KIRKE**, the landlady, leans her head out of the kitchen:

MRS. KIRKE  
Kitty and Minny are waiting!

Jo looks up the stairs to see the two little girls prancing.

JO  
My students need me.

FRIEDRICH  
Always working.

JO  
(joke-dramatically)  
Money is the end and aim of my  
mercenary existence.

FRIEDRICH  
No one gets ink stains like that  
just out of a desire for money.

Jo feels the intense pleasure and pain of being seen by  
someone, of knowing that they know you.

JO  
(embarrassed, retreating)  
Until my sister Amy marries someone  
obscenely wealthy, it's up to me to  
keep the family afloat.

11 EXT. NICE. PROMENADE. CARRIAGE. DAY. WINTER. 1868. 11

Amy rides in an open air carriage with Aunt March, reading a  
letter from home. Everyone in Nice is out. It is the place to  
see and be seen and Amy March is doing both excellently.

AUNT MARCH  
American women are more STURDY.  
These French women couldn't lift a  
hairbrush.

No response from Amy.

AUNT MARCH (CONT'D)  
AMY! I said "These French women  
couldn't lift a hairbrush."

AMY  
Oh yes! Very true, Aunt.

AUNT MARCH  
Don't humor me, girl. What does  
your family of troublemakers write?

Friedrich approaches his room and finds his Complete Works of Shakespeare, waiting. He picks it up, quizzically.

39 INT. BOARDING HOUSE. JO'S ROOM. NEW YORK. DAY. 1869. 39

Friedrich knocks, no answer.

MARMEE (V.O.)

...and conquer themselves so beautifully, that when I come back to them I may be fonder and prouder than ever of my little women."

He tries the door, and it swings open. He finds the room empty, not a scrap of Jo left.

40 EXT. BOARDING HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY. 1869. 40

Mrs. Kirke hangs laundry as Friedrich questions her:

FRIEDRICH

Gone? Why?

MRS. KIRKE

People come, people go.

FRIEDRICH

And she didn't say if she was coming back?

MRS. KIRKE

No, Professor, and my children are in the lurch with their schooling. She was the best teacher they ever had.

Friedrich looks troubled and serious.

41 INT. CONCORD. MARCH HOUSE. JO & MEG'S ROOM. NEW YEAR'S EVE 1861. 41

Everyone is in a general flurry getting ready.

AMY

Why can't we all go to the New Year's party?! It's not fair!

Meg's hair is covered in papers, and Jo manipulates a pair of hot tongs. Meg struggles to get on a pair of slippers.

JO

Just wear your regular /shoes.

MEG

(forcing it)  
/These fit last winter!

MARMEE

Jo, please wait for everyone to be seated to start.

JO

But I'm famished.

MARMEE

Jo, dear, you have a guest.

JO

I don't know anyone!

FRIEDRICH (O.S.)

I am so sorry to intrude.

Jo hears his voice and bolts up, knocking her chair over.

JO

(she bursts out laughing)  
It's you!

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EXT. BOARDING HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY. 1867.

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Jo, with all of her luggage, finds the address and rings the doorbell. Friedrich opens it, he smiles down at this young woman, with his handsome face and merry eyes -- she comes undone before even knowing it.

FRIEDRICH

Hello.

JO

Hello. I'm Josephine March. Jo.  
(she laughs suddenly)  
I don't know why I'm laughing.

FRIEDRICH

(also laughing)  
Nor do I!

JO

Is Mrs. Kirke in? I was sent as a governess and a boarder.

Just then, Mrs. Kirke pushes past him, with her two children.

MRS. KIRKE

Josephine, come in! We've been expecting you!

She leads Jo up through the stairs and Jo takes a quick glance backwards at Friedrich, as if to confirm that the man she saw was real and not an apparition. She finds Friedrich looking back up at her. She turns away again.

MRS. KIRKE (CONT'D)

I see you've met our Professor.  
He's German and quite learned -  
it's really an interesting group  
here...

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BACK TO THE PRESENT. 1869.

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Jo tries to sit, but finds that her chair is knocked over. Friedrich helps her right it.

FRIEDRICH

Jo, I hope it is all right, I got  
your address from Mrs. Kirke -

LAURIE

Who are you?  
(to Amy)  
Who is he?

FRIEDRICH

(backing away)  
I'm so sorry to intrude, I was  
close by and thought I'd, but I'll  
be going...

AMY

-- Please stay! We have more than  
enough room.

LAURIE

Can someone tell me who he is!?

FRIEDRICH

I don't want to be a burden.

MEG

It's no burden at all.

JO

(still stunned)  
Yes, of course. Please.

They make a place for him and he sits down.

LAURIE

(proprietary)  
I'm Laurie.