

*Transition. JO sits on the outskirts of a group of young men. They each have a glass of wine in hand. She listens carefully to two young men – EDWARD and FRANK*

EDWARD: I don't see the advantage at all of women voting. Wouldn't they be confused about what to do with the right to vote anyway?

FRANK: The world is changing. New Zealand, Australia-

EDWARD: Only Southern Australia. And I read it may not be permanent. They'll see if it works and if it doesn't they'll quickly revoke any-

JO: It will work. It must. And women will not be confused in the slightest about what to do with their right to vote because so many of us have thought about what we would do, if and when we could exercise that power, for most of our lives. What we would do is make decisions that are best for us... For our families... For our country... Rather than being forced to allow men to make the decisions for us... Which are more often than not decisions that are only made in favour of ensuring that women are kept as small and as insignificant and as subordinate as possible.

*Transition. JO turns to the audience.*

Needless to say... I wasn't asked back.

START

*Transition. JO and FRIEDRICH enter the boarding house trying to be quiet, so they don't wake anyone.*

FRIEDRICH: Did you enjoy?

JO: Oh, I did. Though I don't think they enjoyed me.

FRIEDRICH: Small minds do not lead to large conversation. I was so happy when you spoke. It was like an eruption. You could not hold back any longer.

JO: No. I guess I couldn't.

FRIEDRICH: Many young men yell philosophies not knowing what they are saying or thinking. It sounds nice to say but they don't care to know the weight of their words. It was a surprise, Miss. March... To hear you speak so clear. So different than what you write.

JO: From what I write?

FRIEDRICH: I read the stories you left. Is that what you write? Is that what you care about?

JO: Well, there's a demand for it. For those types of stories. Adventures, romances, murders.

FRIEDRICH: Mmm-hmm.

JO: And I don't see any harm in supplying it. Many very respectable people make an honest living from it.

FRIEDRICH: Miss. March, there is a demand for whiskey, but I think you and I do not care to sell it. It is what you call... Pandering, no?

JO: No. It's not. And it pays... Well. I send any money I make from my writing home to help my family. I would think you of all people would understand that.

FRIEDRICH: You misunderstand me.

JO: No. I understand you perfectly. You don't like what I write.

FRIEDRICH: I think one should write from the heart. And a heart I know you have. I have seen this with my own eyes.

JO: Writing from the heart is a privilege that not all people... That not all women have.

FRIEDRICH: You are capable of more.

JO: Are you saying this as a teacher, Professor Bhaer?

FRIEDRICH: No, Miss. March. As a friend.

JO: Well I think that a friend would offer more kindness than you have.

FRIEDRICH: Miss. March-

JO: It's late. If you will excuse me. **END**

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*Transition. Clearly still upset from her conversation with FRIEDRICH, JO takes a moment to calm herself. Then walks into MR. DASHWOOD'S office.*

Here are the changes you requested for my latest story.

JO: You would not be bothering in the least.

*There is another roar of laughter.*

Everyone will want to meet you. They've all heard so much about you.

FRIEDRICH: Are you sure?

JO: Yes. Absolutely yes.

*Transition. JO and FRIEDRICH walk outside together after dinner.*

START

JO: I forgot how good you are with children. The twins took to you so quickly. It reminds me of you carrying Kitty and Minnie on your back.

FRIEDRICH: The twins are much easier than them. But don't tell Kitty and Minnie. This is the end of the road. I should walk you back home then perhaps? For safety?

JO: Oh, it's perfectly safe.

FRIEDRICH: Oh.

JO: But you should probably walk me back in any case. Just to be sure.

*They turn in the opposite direction. FRIEDRICH gives her his arm.*

May I ask... What business brought you here?

FRIEDRICH: Well, my friend finds for me a place in a school so I can teach as if I was at home. He lives nearby and I have come to discuss matters with him.

JO: Nearby! This is brilliant. Now I can see you more often.

FRIEDRICH: Ah! But I shall not see you more often, I fear. This school is on the other side of the country, I'm afraid.

JO: *(She begins to cry)* Oh.

FRIEDRICH: *(Wiping JO'S eyes)* No. No. Why do you cry?

JO: Because you're going away.

FRIEDRICH: I must. I must work. I'm a teacher who has been given the chance to teach.

JO: Teach here... With me. My aunt has left me her home. It's a large estate. Huge, in fact. I want to do something with it but haven't known what. But seeing you now it all makes sense. I should open a school.

FRIEDRICH: A school?

JO: Yes. And I'll need someone to help me run it all.

FRIEDRICH: And it is me you want for this?

JO: Who else would be better suited for this than you? I know how splendid you would be... How splendid we would be together.

FRIEDRICH: But what of your writing?

JO: I plan to teach and write. But I want life to keep moving forward. And this is a way that I can do that and do it happily.

FRIEDRICH: I have always dreamed of something like this. You have no idea how much this fills my heart. Can I say something to you?

JO: Anything.

FRIEDRICH: My friend lives nearby. But not that nearby. But when I knew I might have the chance to see you again, I came as soon as I could. I had to see you, Jo. I had to. I think of you always. That house has been so very empty since you left. I have missed you so very much. I hope I do not overstep in saying this but-

JO: I've missed you too. So much so that I haven't even fully admitted it to myself.

FRIEDRICH: To me... You are the most beautiful person living.

JO: Me?

FRIEDRICH: Yes, Jo. You. In every possible way. Oh, Jo. Dear, dear Jo. ~~May I?~~ **END**

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*JO smiles. She pulls FRIEDRICH towards her and kisses him.*