

START JO: Shouldn't you wear another pair? Those are far too small for your feet. You'll hurt yourself.

MEG: These will do just fine. And they match my dress.

*She removes her sheet so they can see her full outfit.*

Well? How do I look?

BETH: Exquisite/

~~AMY: Entrancing.~~

~~JO: And... How do I look?~~

*She removes her sheet so they can see her full outfit. JO doesn't look nearly as elegant as MEG.*

~~AMY: Well...~~

MEG: Oh, Jo. Your dress! What have you done? It's burnt.

JO: I stood too close to the fireplace.

MEG: You can't wear that.

JO: This is all I have.

MEG: Well, you're going to have to keep your back out of sight, Jo. You'll have to stand up against a wall.

JO: For the whole night?

MEG: Yes. No one can see you like this.

JO: When have you ever seen me stand in one place for that-

MEG: Jo, your gloves! They're disgusting.

JO: I spilled lemonade on them the last time I wore them.

MEG: Well, you can't wear those.

JO: Then I'll go without gloves.

MEG: No! You must have gloves. Gloves are more important than anything else.

JO: I can think of many other things that are more important than-

MEG: I'll be mortified if you don't have gloves. If you don't have gloves, I won't go. I simply won't-

JO: What if we each wear one good glove and carry one bad one?

MEG: Your hands are bigger than mine. You'll stretch mine out.

JO: Then I'll hold mine crumpled up in my hand so no one sees them.

MEG: Fine. Oh Jo, please behave yourself. And don't put your hands behind your back, or stare, or say strange things.

JO: Meg, I won't.

~~AMY: She will.~~

~~BETH: You have to go or you will be late. Be home before eleven. And be sure to come back with stories.~~

*Transition. JO and MEG walk down a long hallway in MRS. GARDINER'S mansion.*

MEG: Hold your shoulders straight, take short steps, and don't shake hands especially if you're introduced to someone. It isn't a thing anymore.

JO: It isn't?

MEG: No.

JO: Well, if you see me doing anything wrong just send me a wink.

MEG: Absolutely not. Winking isn't lady-like. How about if I lift my eyebrows like this.

*MEG lifts her eyebrows over and over again.*

JO: Yes. That's so much better.

*A song begins to play in the next room. JO heads for the party but MEG stands frozen in place.*

MEG: We never go to parties.

JO: And if we stay here we won't go to this party either. *(Offering her hand)* Together?

MEG: *(Taking JO'S hand)* Together.

*Transition. They enter a giant ballroom. Men and women chat, laugh, and move about the room in a flurry of glee. MEG spots SALLIE GARDINER and ANNIE MOFFAT. As MEG goes over to them, JO grabs her hand.*

JO: I don't like those girls.

MEG: They're quite pleasant when you get to know them.

JO: I don't want to get to know them.

**END**

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*SALLIE and ANNIE approach them.*

MEG: Sallie! Annie!

SALLIE: Meg! Hello! Mother told me she sent you an invitation. Here I was afraid I wouldn't know a single person this evening.

JO: Isn't this your house? Don't you know everyone here?

MEG: Sallie, this is my sister Josephine.

JO: It's Jo.

*She reaches her hand out to shake SALLIE'S, but MEG immediately slaps JO'S hand away.*

Oww.

SALLIE: Annie was just showing me her ring.

*ANNIE holds out her left hand to show off her ring.*

MEG: You're engaged!

ANNIE: It belonged to his grandmother.

MEG: It's beautiful.

JOHN: We got on the train as soon as he was cleared to travel.

MARMEE: John, thank you for bringing him home.

JOHN: I did my best to play nurse in your absence.

MR. MARCH: I can't believe I'm in the same room as all of you. The thought of you is the only thing that's kept me going all this time. The only thing that...

MARMEE: Come. Let me make you something. You must be starving after your journey.

*She leads MR. MARCH to the dining room table.*

MR. LAURENCE: The boy and I should be leaving. I'm delighted our little surprise worked.

JO: You can't go now. You should stay for dinner. Both of you should.

LAURIE: Can we?

MR. LAURENCE: If it isn't too much trouble.

BETH: Of course, it isn't.

*She grabs MR. LAURENCE's arm and leads him to the table.  
As they all leave the room to eat, JO heads upstairs.*

MEG: Where are you going?

JO: I have to write.

MEG: Now?

JO: Yes now. I have an idea for a new story. I don't want to forget it. I'll write it down quickly. I won't be long.

*As everyone leaves the room MEG grabs JOHN'S hand to keep him back.*

START

MEG: John. I can't thank you enough for being so good to mother and father... And to me. To all of us.

JOHN: Of course. I would do anything for you, Meg.

MEG: Thank you for that.

JOHN: Meg... I want you to know... I've been called to serve. I received a letter earlier this week. I'm to leave later this month.

MEG: No!

JOHN: It's all right. I want to go. But I don't know when I'll return or if I'll return so-

MEG: Oh, John. You will. You will. You mustn't think like that-

JOHN: And because I don't know when else I might have the chance to tell you... I want you to know that... I love you. Meg, I love you dearly. I think the world of you. And the timing is all very sudden and uncertain. But I'm willing to work all my life to make you feel loved. Nothing would make me happier in fact than spending the rest of my days making you as happy as I possibly can.

MEG: Oh John. I don't know. Is it too soon?

JOHN: I'll wait. I'll wait as long as you want me to.

*As JOHN takes MEG'S hands in his, the door swings open and AUNT MARCH enters the house.*

AUNT MARCH: Bless me, what is all this?

*MEG drops JOHN'S hands instantly.*

MEG: Aunt March! This is Father's friend... Our friend... My friend.

AUNT MARCH: Well, whose friend is he?

MEG: Mine. Both. This is Mr. Brooke. Mr. John Brooke.

JOHN: *(Reaching out his hand)* Pleased to meet you Aunt March.

AUNT MARCH: And what is this friend saying to you to make you blush so much?

MEG: We were merely talking.

AUNT MARCH: Aren't you that Laurence boy's tutor?

JOHN: That's correct.

AUNT MARCH: Hmmm, yes. I see now. It's all become quite clear. You haven't gone and accepted him, have you child?

MEG: Aunt March!

AUNT MARCH: Tell me Margaret, do you mean to marry this Mr. Cook?

JOHN: It's Brooke. Mr-

AUNT MARCH: Because I don't want you to spoil your whole life by making a silly mistake. You ought to marry well and help your family.

MEG: Mother and Father like John a great deal and are quite aware of who and what he is.

AUNT MARCH: Margaret, this Mr. Rook is poor!

JOHN: It's Brooke. Mr-

AUNT MARCH: He doesn't have any rich relations, does he?

MEG: He has many warm friends.

AUNT MARCH: You can't live on friends, Margaret regardless of how warm they are. He doesn't have any business, does he?

JOHN: I am a tutor.

AUNT MARCH: You intend to marry a man without money, position or business and go on only to work harder and longer than you do now? I thought you had more sense in you. You could be comfortable for all your days by listening to me and doing better.

MEG: I couldn't do better if I waited half my life! John's got heaps of talent. He's willing to work, he's energetic, and brave and-

AUNT MARCH: He knows you have rich relations. That's the secret of his liking, Margaret.

JOHN: I beg your pardon. How dare you say such a thing! I would never marry for money. And I am willing to work. I'm not afraid of being poor. I've been happy in my life so far with all that I have.

MEG: As have I.

JOHN: And nothing would make me happier than spending the rest of my days making Meg happy.

MEG: And I know I shall be happy with him because he loves me and I love him.

JOHN: You... You...

AUNT MARCH: Well, then I wash my hands of the whole affair. And now I haven't the strength to see sweet little Beth. Don't expect anything from me when you're married. Your Mr. Hook and all his friends can take care of you.

*As she walks to the front door JOHN shows her out and shuts the door behind her.*

JOHN: And the name is Brooke! Mr. John Brooke! *(To MEG)* Thank you for defending me. And proving that you do care for me.

MEG: I didn't know how much until she started to abuse you like that. John... My John.

JOHN: Oh, Meg. I don't know when I'll return.

MEG: We'll have a long engagement.

JOHN: Meg... Does this mean that you'll-

MEG: Yes, John. Yes. It does. With all my heart.

**END**

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*JOHN cups her face and kisses her. JO starts to come down the stairs but stops in her tracks when she sees them.*

MEG: Oh, Jo. Do congratulate us.

JO: Congratulate you? For what?

MEG: We're to be married.

JO: How long have I been upstairs? Marmee! Meg is sick!

*MARREE rushes in and sees MEG and JOHN together.*

MARREE: Oh, my word. Oh, my dears.

*LAURIE enters the room.*