

Scene 4

JO. He sure can play.

*They listen for a moment.*

AMY. It's sad.

JO. An orphan, growing up alone in that big house—you'd be sad, too.

MEG. He has a tutor, Hannah said, and his grandfather.

JO. You can be lonely in a crowd, if it's not the right crowd.

*Jo, stuffing her hand in her pockets, begins whistling along with the music—*

AMY. Don't, Jo—it's so boyish.

*Jo whistles even louder. The music stops. Jo whistles the next part. The piano responds. They duet for a minute. Then it stops.*

*A shadow comes to the window. Jo raises a hand to wave—the shadow slowly raises its hand, mirroring her. Another shadow comes to the window and pulls the first one away. The girls turn to go.*

Meg, my dime? My dime, Meg? My dime?

*Meg fishes out a dime. Amy skips off, singing. Jo picks up Amy's discarded potato.*

JO. POTATO!

*Maybe she chucks the potato after Amy, football-style; however it happens, Amy has escaped.*

AMY. (Off, singing to the tune of "Battle Hymn.") Limes! Limes! Limes! Limes! Limes!

JO. You never would have given me a dime, in our school days.

MEG. Don't be jealous.

JO. Me—jealous of Amy?!

MEG. Time for work, Josephine.

*Jo makes a face. Meg exits—Jo pauses, still staring at the window.*

(Off) Jo!

*Jo exits.*

where is the exit to outside - SK or US?

A repetition of Amy's little song from offstage: "Limes, Limes, Limes! Limes! Limes!"—and then a hard sound of a SLAP! Amy screams offstage—and then runs onstage. She runs until she's almost home, is about to go inside—but hesitates outside. She sits on a snowbank and feels sorry for herself. Laurie, a handsome, sweet young man, comes out to the mailbox with a letter.

LAURIE. Oh! Hello!

*Amy cries hysterically.*

—Are you all right?

*She cries.*

—I say, miss, are you all right?

AMY. Leave me alone! LEAVE ME ALONE TO DIE IN THE SNOWWWWWWW!

*She throws herself down and sobs into the snow.*

LAURIE. —Come, what's the matter?

AMY. (Cries.) —I can't say, it's too shameful!

LAURIE. (Improvising.) Well—sure. A damsel in distress should retain an air of mystery.

*He offers her a hankie.*

You're one of the March girls, aren't you?

I've been watching—seeing you all. I'm Theodore Laurence. (Laurie doesn't have any friends.) But my friends call me Laurie.

*He holds out a hand to shake.*

AMY. Laurie Laurence? That's terrible. (Sniffs.) Why not Theodore?

LAURIE. It's just not who I am.

*Pause.*

—Don't you want to go indoors?

AMY. Nobody understands in there.

LAURIE. Truly? You all seem so happy together. I mean, when I happen to—to see you.

AMY. They tease and scold me and think I'm spoilt!

NO no—nobody even TRIES to understand me ANYWHERE!

*She wails again.*

LAURIE. —I'm trying.

*She looks at him and sniffs.*

AMY. Well—I owed a dozen pickled limes to the other girls at school, you see—

LAURIE. Of course—

AMY. —for if one girl likes another, she gives her a lime, and I was becoming a piranha—

LAURIE. Naturally—

AMY. And—and Mr. Smith caught me passing a lime—

LAURIE. The scoundrel—

AMY. —and he brought me to the front of the room and he took a rod and he—he WHACKED me!

LAURIE. Shall I kill him for you?

AMY. Yes please.

*Amy holds out her hand, which is red.*

It's all red and hot.

*He carefully blows on her hand a little.*

LAURIE. —better?

*Amy nods and wipes her tears. From the Laurences' house, Brooks, Laurie's tutor, enters. He can't see Amy until he's almost upon them.*

BROOKS. (Quite angry and frustrated.) Theodore Laurence, you cannot escape your lessons forever!—Oh

*He stops short, uncomfortable—he's not good with children.*

What is—that?

LAURIE. It's the neighbors' little girl, Brooks.

BROOKS. —Hello, uh—Neighbor's Little Girl. / Have you—hurt, or...

AMY. I am NOT a little girl, I'm NOT—

BROOKS. (Reacting to the meltdown.) all right—Just bring her to her parents—

AMY. —I AM A FULL-GROWN WOMAN!

*She sits on the snowbank and starts sobbing, this time straight into Laurie's handkerchief.*

Brooks looks at Laurie—he clearly doesn't have it handled.

Brooks marches up to the Marches' door and knocks. Laurie attempts to console a sobbing Amy.

BROOKS. Theodore, you have Latin!!!!

*As he knocks quite hard, the door swings open on Brooks—it's Meg; she's been doing housework and is wiping her hands on an apron. Brooks looks at her, stunned—his hand keeps knocking on empty air.*

MEG. Yes?

*Long pause.*

Can I help you?

Brooks is finally able to stop knocking but cannot speak.

LAURIE. —I, uh, found a damsel in distress upon your snowbank.

*Jo has crowded behind Meg, Beth behind Jo.*

MEG. Amy, what are you doing here?!!!!

JO. Christopher Columbus, why aren't you in school?!!

*Beth heads towards Amy and wordlessly touches her, consoling.*

*Amy bursts into even noisier tears.*

MEG. Please excuse us, Mr.—

*Brooks cannot speak. Beth holds on to Amy, supporting her into the house.*

AMY. I want to talk to Marmee—

MEG. Mr.—?

AMY. (Really sobbing.) I WANT TO TALK TO Marmee!

MEG. Please excuse us!

*Meg shuts the door quickly, leaving Jo outside; the slam brings Brooks back to life.*

BROOKS. Brooks. John Brooks.

*He stands staring at the door.*