

MR. LAURENCE. (*Following Mrs. MARCH out of gate to L.*) I seek the philosopher of the apple orchard!

(MEG crosses to gate L.)

BROOKE. Aren't you going to wait for me?

MEG. Come along, slow poke.

(MEG, BROOKE, Mrs. MARCH and Mr. LAURENCE exit L., through gate laughing and talking together. AMY starts to follow them, but LAURIE intercepts her.)

Start — LAURIE. Amy, wait! What a day and what a place! Somehow it makes me think of that old garden at Valrosa. Do you remember?

AMY. Shall I ever forget? You used to read to me by the hour, while I sketched.

LAURIE. (*Laughing*) And lectured. Don't forget that, please.

AMY. (*Contritely*) Did I lecture, Laurie?

LAURIE. Well, rather—regular rousers, but it did me good, made me ashamed of my lazy ways. (*Going up c.*) When do you begin your great work of art, Raphaella?

AMY. Never. Rome took all the vanity out of me, for after seeing the wonders there, I felt too insignificant to live, and gave up all my foolish hopes in despair.

LAURIE. Why should you, with so much energy and talent?

AMY. That's just why. Because talent isn't genius, and no amount of energy can make it so. I want to be great or nothing. (*Goes R. to seat under tree*) I won't be a commonplace dauber, so I don't intend to try any more. (*Sits on R. bench*)

LAURIE. I'm glad of it. (*Going to her*)

AMY. Why?

LAURIE. Because—because—I—I—well, I don't think a career is suited to you, Amy—you belong—

AMY. Yes—

LAURIE. That is—Amy—

AMY. Yes, Laurie—

LAURIE. I—I—

AMY. Yes, Laurie—

LAURIE. (*To c., floundering hopelessly*) I've found those sketches you made of the trail at Vevay.

AMY. (*Rises*) Wasn't that walk through the woods wonderful? But I loved even more our mornings on the lake. (*Going to c. to him*)

LAURIE. (*Dreamily*) When we floated under the tower and in the shadows of the old castle.

AMY. With the mountains on every side. (*Both sigh and then look at each other. LAURIE is looking down at AMY so tenderly that AMY is confused and afraid to maintain silence, makes an effort to go on talking, laughing, embarrassed*) How well we used to pull together, didn't we?

LAURIE. (*Stopping short and taking both her hands in his, facing her and looking down at her tenderly, his embarrassment gone, quiet and very earnest*) So well that I wish we might always pull in the same boat. Will you, Amy? Will you?

AMY. (*Speaking very softly*) Yes, Laurie.

LAURIE. (*Taking her in his arms and kissing her*) When did you begin to care, dear?

AMY. (*Seriously*) Always, I think, Laurie, and I struggled against it, for I thought you loved Jo.

LAURIE. Dear, I was wrong about Jo, and headstrong, and Jo was right. May it be very soon, Amy?

AMY. Yes, dear.

LAURIE. Mrs. Laurence! Oh, I say, how good that sounds!



AMY. (*With curtsey*) My lord—

LAURIE. (*Low bow*) My lady—

END

(*They embrace. AMY sees MR. LAURENCE over LAURIE'S shoulder, gives a scream, picks up skirt and runs off R.I.*)

MR. LAURENCE. (*Comes c. stage, smiling, to where LAURIE is standing, grasps him by both hands, almost hugging him*) My boy, it's what I've been hoping for for years.

(*JO and BHAER enter back stage, up L., on platform run, pacing to and fro, talking, and not seeing the others, backs to audience.*)

LAURIE. I'm glad you're pleased, sir.

MR. LAURENCE. (*Laughing*) What will Jo say?

LAURIE. (*Who has spied her, pointing across the bridge and laughing*) Well, I don't think she'll mind. Oh, I say, Grandpa, get the professor away, won't you? I want to get the first skim, as we used to say when we were children and squabbled over the cream.

MR. LAURENCE. (*Starting across the bridge, up c. and off on platform*) All right, my lad. (*Half way across he stops, as if thinking up an excuse, finally goes over to where the professor and Jo are talking. LAURIE withdraws to one side, and as soon as Jo looks his way, beckons her energetically to come over to him. All this is pantomime*) Professor Bhaer. (*Takes the professor's arm and leads him off, going L.U.*) Have you seen the Archaeological Society's last report on the burial customs of the ancients? (*The professor looks surprised, so does Jo, and LAURIE is convulsed at the flimsy excuse fabricated by the old gentleman, who links his*

*arm through the professor's, and draws him away, evidently against the latter's will, the voices dying away in the distance*) I hear it has aroused a storm of protest in Boston. Mr. March and I were discussing it and we wondered if you—

JO. (*Has, in the meantime, slowly crossed the bridge, comes downstage to LAURIE, whom she regards suspiciously, evidently expecting trouble or teasing of some kind. c.*) What is it, Teddy? You look wicked. Out with it, you bad boy! What mischief have you been up to now?

LAURIE. (*c.—dropping on his knees and folding his hands as if asking pardon*) Please, ma'am, I'm going to get married.

JO. Mercy on me, what dreadful thing will you do next?

LAURIE. (*Sits back on heels, laughing*) A characteristic, but not exactly complimentary congratulation.

JO. What can you expect when you take one's breath away and let the cat out of the bag like that? Who is she? Do I know her? Get up, you ridiculous boy, and tell me all about it!

LAURIE. (*Springs up lightly*) Yes, you know her, Jo. You've known her longer than I have.

JO. Miss Randall?

LAURIE. No. (*Going R.*)

JO. Not Ned Moffat's sister? Oh, I hope not.

LAURIE. Guess again. Come nearer home.

JO. Not Amy?

LAURIE. (*Simply*) Who else could it be, Jo? Haven't you seen?

JO. Teddy, dear, I am so glad. When did you first find out?

LAURIE. I don't just know, but I began to suspect when we were at Valrosa. Such a day! My faith! But wasn't it love among the roses? (*For a*