

JO

Take it back? That's like bringing back a chicken after you've chopped off its head.

AMY

Do let us keep it.

MEG

It's Christmas, Marmee.

MARMEE

No. Destroying someone else's property - ?

BETH

(coming right in)

Well, we could give it to the Hummels. They have so little.

MARMEE

Good. The tree goes to the Hummels then. Now what about Mr. Laurence?

(MR. LAURENCE, a very stern, solidly-built man in his early 70s, appears in the doorway. Standing behind him, almost unnoticed is his grandson, LAURIE)

MR. LAURENCE

What about him?

MEG

(surprised)

Mr. Laurence?

MR. LAURENCE

Yes, Mr. Laurence!

(To Jo)

You!

JO

Me?

MR. LAURENCE

You chopped down my perfect Douglas fir. I should have you arrested!

JO

I'll make it up to you, sir.

MR. LAURENCE

With what?

JO

I'll plant six more.

MR. LAURENCE

Twelve!

JO

And I'll chop your firewood for a few days.

MR. LAURENCE

Weeks! And I hope such an incident never happens again. You've ruined my day!

(HE goes. THEY all see LAURIE, a boy of 16, who has remained behind, reticent, but wanting to say something)

LAURIE

He loves his trees. I'm Theodore Laurence the Third. But everyone calls me Laurie. I've come to live here. In Concord. I play the piccolo. I can sleep standing up. And I won a medal at school for holding my breath nearly three minutes before passing out.

(To Jo)

I think that was terrifically daring of you chopping down Grandfather's tree. Well, goodbye.

(HE starts to leave)

JO

(calling after him)

Theodore Laurence the Third! Would you mind delivering this tree to the Hummels?

MARMEE

Jo!

LAURIE

I don't mind at all.

JO

He doesn't mind.

LAURIE

Just point me in the direction.

JO

They live half a mile down the road. The red house with the broken shingles.

LAURIE

(Taking up the tree)

Merry Christmas!

(HE goes.)