

**JO**

And at that moment, Rodrigo appears in magnificent splendor!

**RODRIGO & JO**

*(HE appears, brandishing a sword)*

Unhand that woman, villain!

**BRAXTON, CLARISSA & JO**

Who are you?

**RODRIGO & JO**

I AM YOUR DESTINY!

YOUR BITTEREST FOE!

**RODRIGO**

YOU STOLE WHAT WAS RIGHTLY MINE

TEN LONG YEARS AGO!

YOU LEFT ME COLD, ALONE AND FORGOTTEN,

NOW I'M BACK TO SETTLE THE SCORE!

**PROFESSOR BHAER**

*(Interrupting her diplomatically)*

Miss March!

*(HE smiles at her)*

Tell me, what is it you are writing here?

**JO**

Blood-and-guts stuff. It's all the rage. The magazines and periodicals are full of it.

**PROFESSOR BHAER**

Violence and seduction on every page?

**JO**

Read Shakespeare. Read history. Read the newspapers.

**PROFESSOR BHAER**

It is getting late. Perhaps it is best we pursue this some other time.

**JO**

No. I want to know what you think, Professor.

**PROFESSOR BHAER**

Blood and guts stuff? What you think the world wants to hear? If I have noticed nothing else about you, Miss March, I have noticed you are unique. Something you should try not to forget. I think you could do better.

JO

*(taken aback)*

Better? ... And who are you anyway: an aging German professor, close to 50 - ?

PROFESSOR BHAER

*(taken aback)*

I am 34.

JO

34, really? Well - you look a lot older.

PROFESSOR BHAER

I worry a lot.

JO

And just what do you worry about?

PROFESSOR BHAER

How to avoid a conversation such as this! Now I will go to dinner.

*(HE starts away, immediately turns back)*

Miss March, since you have been here - six weeks now, is it? - you shout, you rant, you upset the whole order of this boarding house. I am a serene and peaceful man.

JO

You're aloof, you're arrogant -

PROFESSOR BHAER

Arrogant? Miss March, I spoke my mind, as you spoke yours. Obviously, it was not appreciated on either side.

*(HE goes)*

#2 - Better

JO

Obviously!

*(HE goes)*

My stories were a great success in Concord.

*(SHE looks at her story)*

BETTER?

BETTER THAN WHAT?

BETTER THAN THIS DAZZLING PLOT?

BETTER?

THIS STORY WILL BE MY 'KING LEAR'.