

SCENE 4

(THE MARCH PARLOR: #4.

BETH is at the piano playing. The piano has one broken note which BETH hits and hits again. MR. LAURENCE appears in the doorway)

MR. LAURENCE

That piano sounds terrible.

BETH

It needs a tuning, sir.

MR. LAURENCE

(Entering)

Where is my grandson, Laurie?

BETH

I'm sure he'll be home soon.

MR. LAURENCE

The boy's missed six lessons - fallen behind in all his work. I have strictly forbidden him to associate with this family.

BETH

Why, sir?

MR. LAURENCE

Because a man needs an iron will if he's to succeed in this world. And this family will only soften him.... Which one of the dreadful little March girls are you?

BETH

I'm dreadful Beth.

MR. LAURENCE

Oh, yes, Laurie said you're the one who wants to play my priceless piano. It's out of the question. The piano belonged to my daughter, Laurie's mother. It's been locked since she passed away, and that's how it shall stay...

Are you afraid of me?

BETH

A little.

MR. LAURENCE

Why?

BETH

It might have something to do with your face, sir. It's very hard.