

~~never thought that such a thing would happen to me. I was hard for a fella not to have some things creep into his character.~~

EMILY. (*The complete prig*) I always expect a man to be perfect and I think he should be.

GEORGE. Oh, I—I don't think it's possible to be perfect, Emily.

EMILY. (*All innocence, yet firm*) Well, my father is. And as far as I can see, your father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be, too.

GEORGE. Well, I feel it's the other way round; that men aren't naturally good, but girls are.

EMILY. Well, you might as well know right now that I'm not perfect.—It's not as easy for a girl to be perfect as a man, because, well, we girls are more—nervous— (*Her face controls and she turns L.*) Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it. (*Cries.*)

GEORGE. (*Choked voice*) Emily—

EMILY. Now I can see it's not the truth at all. And I suddenly feel that it's not important, anyway. (*Cries harder, hands to eyes*)

GEORGE. Emily—would you like an ice-cream soda, or something, before you go home?

EMILY. (*Controlling self*) Well, thank you—I—I would. (*GEORGE starts to take her arm, but is too shy. They start slowly down and turn into the drug-store R. C.*)

GEORGE. (*Over his emotions, as they walk, first gruffly, then courteously*) Hello, Stew, how are you?— Good afternoon, Mrs. Slocum. (*He starts R. into store, then steps back to let her go first*) (*EMILY Xes him to R. stool. GEORGE Xes to left end of board, puts books on it.*)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Enters down R., wearing glasses as MR. MORGAN, Xes to R. end of board*) Hello, George. Hello Emily. What'll you have?— Why, Emily Webb, what you been cryin' about?

GEORGE. (*Quickly Xing to her side as she looks to him for help*) She got an awful scare, Mr. Morgan. That—that hardware-store wagon almost ran over her. Everybody says Tom Huckins drives like a crazy man. (*EMILY nods agreement*)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Xing down R. to draw water*) Here, take a good drink-a-water, Emily. (*EMILY and GEORGE sit on stools, respectively R. and L. embarrassed. BOTH looking front*) You look all shook up. I tell you, you got to look both ways before you cross Main Street these days. (*Sets glass before her, She sips*) Gets worse every year— What'll you have?

EMILY. (*Hardly able to speak*) I'll have a strawberry phosphate, Mr. Morgan.

GEORGE. No, no, Emily—have a soda with me.

EMILY. Well,—

GEORGE. Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, Mr. Morgan.

STAGE MANAGER. (*Xing down R., facing out, as he mixes two sodas*) Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, yes sir. Yes, sir,—I want to tell you,—there are two hundred and twenty-five horses in Grover's Corners this minute I'm talking to you. (*GEORGE and EMILY face front through all this, she with tears in eyes, he very upset*) State Inspector was in here yestiddy. And now they're bringing in these auto-mo-biles, best thing to do is just stay home. Why I can remember when dogs used to sleep in the middle of the street all day, and nothing ever come to disturb'm. (*Sets sodas before them*) There you are! (*Sees someone off down R.*) Yes, Mrs. Ellis, be with you in a minute. What can I do for you? (*Exits down R.*)

EMILY. (*Awed*) They're so expensive. (*Sips through straw*)

GEORGE. No, no—don't you think of that, Emily.

We're celebrating—our election— And then do you know what else I'm celebrating?

EMILY. N-no.

GEORGE. I'm celebrating because I've got a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me.

EMILY. (*Tearfully*) George, please don't think of that. I don't know why I said it. It's not true. You're—

GEORGE. (*With brief look at her*) No, Emily, you *stick* to it. I'm *glad* you spoke to me like you did. But you'll *see*. I'm going to change so quick—you bet I'm going to change. (*She sips, winking back tears*) And Emily, I want to ask you a favor.

EMILY. W-wh-a-t?

GEORGE. Emily, if I go away to State Agriculture College next year, (*The thought hurts EMILY and she turns down R. biting lip*) will you write me a letter once in a while?

EMILY. (*Winks back tears*) I certainly will. I certainly will, George— (*Sips*) It certainly seems like being away three years you'd get out of touch with things. Maybe letters from Grover's Corners wouldn't be so interesting after a while. Grover's Corners isn't a very important place when you think of—all New Hampshire; but I think it's a very nice town. (*Sips*)

GEORGE. The day wouldn't come when I wouldn't want to know everything about our town. I know *that's* true. Emily—

EMILY. Well, I'll try to make the letters interesting. (*Pause*)

GEORGE. Y'know, Emily, whenever I meet a farmer I ask him if he thinks it's important to go to Agriculture School to be a good farmer.

EMILY. (*Looks at him, Happy that he may not leave town*) Why, George—

GEORGE. (*Eagerly*) Yeh, and some of them say

it's even a waste of time. (*She looks out down R., happy*) You can get all that stuff, anyway, in the pamphlets the Government sends out— And Uncle Luke's gettin' old,—he's about ready for me to start in taking over his farm tomorrow, if I could.

EMILY. (*Glowing*) My!

GEORGE. (*Front*) And like you say, being gone all that time—in other places and meeting other people—Gosh, if anything like that can happen I don't want to go away—I guess new people probably aren't any better than old ones. I'll bet they almost never are. Emily—I feel that you're as good a friend as I've got. I don't need to go and meet the people in other towns.

EMILY. (*To him, arguing nobly against her inclinations*) But George, maybe it's very important for you to go and learn all that,—about cattle-judging and soils and those things. (*Adding feebly*) Of course, I don't know.

GEORGE. (*After a pause—very serious*) Emily I'm going to make up my mind right now—I won't go. I'll tell Pa about it tonight.

EMILY. Why George. I don't see why you have to decide right now— It's a whole year away. (*Turns away, biting lip*)

GEORGE. Emily, I'm *glad* you spoke to me about that—that fault in my character. What you said was right; but there was one thing wrong in it. That's where you said that I wasn't noticing—people—and you, for instance—why, you say you were watchin' me when I did everything— Why, I was doing the same about you all the time. (*She looks at him wide-eyed, he at her*) Why sure—I always thought about you as one of the chief people I thought about. (*She turns away, joyously tearful*) I always made sure where you were sitting on the bleachers, and who you were with, and for three days not I've tried to walk home with you; but something's always got

in the way. Yesterday, I was standing over by the wall waiting for you, (*Almost weeping*) and you waked home with Miss Corcoran.

EMILY. (*Breaking down a moment*) Oh, George!—Life's awful funny! (*Almost pleading*) How could I have known that? I thought—

GEORGE. Listen, Emily, I'm going to tell you why I'm not going to Agricultural School. I think once you've found a person you're very fond of—I mean a person who's fond of you, too, and who likes you well enough to be interested in your character— (*EMILY turns down R., terribly embarrassed*) Well, I think that's just as important as college is, and even more so. That's what I think.

EMILY. (*Quietly*) I think that's awfully important, too. (*Pause*)

GEORGE. Emily—

EMILY. Y—yes, George.

GEORGE. (*His head down. Squirming*) Emily, if I do improve, and make a big change,—would you be—I mean: could you be—

EMILY. (*Bursting into tears*) I—I am now; and I always have been.

GEORGE. (*Pause*) So I guess—this is an important talk we've been having— (*Snuffs*)

EMILY. Yes—yes. (*Pause. He suddenly dives into his soda, she into hers*)

GEORGE. (*Deep breath; straightens*) Wait just a minute and I'll walk you home. (*BOTH rise, EMILY Xes to wait by chair, R. of up C. facing up. STAGE MANAGER enters down R., Xes to table. GEORGE Xes to front of EMILY's stool*) Mr. Morgan, I'll—I'll have to go home and get the money to pay you for this.

STAGE MANAGER. (*Pretending annoyance*) What's that? George Gibbs, do you mean to tell me—!

GEORGE. Yes. But I had reasons, Mr. Morgan.

Look— (*Takes watch from trouser watch-pocket, holds it out to STAGE MANAGER*) here's my gold watch to keep until I come back with the money.

STAGE MANAGER. That's all right, George. Keep you watch. I'll trust you.

GEORGE. I'll be back in five minutes.

STAGE MANAGER. I'll trust you ten years, George—not a day over.— (*GEORGE slowly gets the point—laughs, returns watch, gets book under R. arm, starts up to EMILY*) Got all over your shock, Emily?

EMILY. (*Turns, step a bit L.*) Yes, thank you, Mr. Morgan—it was nothing.

GEORGE. (*Turning by her side*) I'm ready. (*BOTH walk down C. and off through trellis down L., very straight and radiant, but not looking at each other*)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Watches them off, then removes glasses and puts them in pocket, Xes C.*) Well, (*Claps hands*) now we'll get on to the wedding.

~~(*Lighting the stage with a pin-spot which covers him fade out. Two ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS during the following speech remove the trellises, tables and the bench, and set thirty-two chairs facing up, sixteen on either side of an aisle in close formation to suggest the pews of a church, four chairs to a row. They also set up C. a box for a pulpit and an extra chair R. of the first row for SIMON STIMSON*)~~

~~STAGE MANAGER. There are a lot of things to be said about a wedding. There are a lot of thoughts that go on during a wedding. We can't get them all into one wedding, naturally,—especially not into a wedding at Grover's Corners, where weddings are mighty short and plain. In this play I take the part of the minister. That gives me the right to say a few things more. Yes, for a while now the~~