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## **Audition Scene 1: Joe and Dr. Gibbs**

JOE: Mornin', Doc! (Tosses paper onto a neighbor's veranda)

DR. GIBBS: Mornin', Joe!

JOE: Want your paper now?

DR. GIBBS: Yes, I'll take it. (JOE hands to DR. GIBBS, who opens it, starts reading it)

JOE: Anybody been sick, Doc?

DR. GIBBS: No. Some twins over in Polish Town—Joe, I see your teacher Miss Foster is goin' to get married.

JOE: Yes, sir, to a feller over in Concord.

DR. GIBBS: I declare. Well, how do you boys feel about that?

JOE: Well, of course it ain't none of my business—but I think if a person starts out to be a teacher she ought to stay one. (Starts L throwing papers.)

DR. GIBBS: How's your knee, Joe?

JOE: Fine, Doc, I never think about it at all. Only like you said, it always tells me when it's going to rain.

DR. GIBBS: What's it telling you today? Goin' to rain? JOE: No sir.

DR. GIBBS: Sure?

JOE: Yes sir.

DR. GIBBS: Knee ever make a mistake? JOE: No sir.

## Audition Scene 2: GEORGE and EMILY

GEORGE: (Xing up to her books under R arm) Emily, can I carry your books home for you? EMILY: (Cooly) Why—uh—thank you. It isn't far. (GEORGE takes her books.)

GEORGE: (BOTH shy) I'm awfully glad you were elected too, Emily.

EMILY: (Coldly) Thank you. (Stops up C. facing down. He stops R of her)

GEORGE: (Hurt) Emily, why are you mad at me?

EMILY: (Defensively) I'm not mad at you.

GEORGE: You've been treating me so funny lately.

EMILY: (Dreading to face the issue) Well, since you asked me, I might as well say it right out, George—(Sees TEACHER, passing) Oh, goodbye, Miss Corcoran. (Faces down again)

GEORGE: (Turning, then back) Goodbye, Miss Corcoran. —Wha-what is it?

EMILY: (Delicately) I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year. (GEORGE turns R, a bit hurt.) I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings; but I've just got to—tell the truth and shame the devil.

GEORGE: —A change? —What-what do you mean?

EMILY: (On verge of tears) Well, up to a year ago, I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you while you did everything—because we'd been friends so long. And then you began spending all your time at baseball. And you never stopped to speak to anybody any more—not to really speak—not even to your own family, you didn't. And George, it's a fact—ever sense you've been elected Captain, you've got awful stuck up and conceited, and all the girls say so. And it hurts me to hear 'em say it' but I got to agree with 'em a little, because it's true.

GEORGE: (Helpless and hurt) Gosh, Emily—I never thought that such a thing was happening to me—I guess it's hard for a fella not to have some faults creep into his character.

EMILY: 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 contorts and she turns L) Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it. (Cries harder, with hand to eyes.)

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.)

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 drugstore RC)

### **Audition Scene 3: MRS. WEBB and MRS. GIBBS**

MRS. GIBBS: Now, Myrtle, I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody, I'll burst.

MRS. WEBB: Why, Julia Gibbs!

MRS. GIBBS: Myrtle, did one of those second-hand furniture men from Boston come to see you last Friday?

MRS. WEBB: (Reaches for bean, snapping ends off and putting in a bowl between them.) No-o. MRS. GIBBS: Well, he called on me. First I thought he was a patient wantin' to see Doctor Gibbs. He wormed his way into my parlor, and he offered me \$350 for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here!

MRS. WEBB: Why, Julia Gibbs! (Continues work)

MRS. GIBBS: (Continues work) He did! That old thing! Why, it was so big I didn't know where to put it and I almost gave it to Cousin Hester Wilcox.

MRS. WEBB: Well, you're going to take it, aren't you?

MRS. GIBBS: I don't know.

MRS. WEBB: You don't know!—Three hundred and fifty dollars? What's come over you? MRS. GIBBS: Well, if I could get the Doctor to take the money and go away some place on a trip I'd sell it like that. (Stops work) Y'know, Myrtle, it's been the dream of my life to see Paris, France. (Glances slyly at MRS WEBB, who is shocked, then laughs, hand to face.) Oh, I don't know. It sounds crazy, I supposed, but for years I been promising myself that if we ever had the chance—

MRS. WEBB: How's the Doctor feel about it?

MRS. GIBBS: Well, I did beat about the bush a little bit and said that if I got a legacy—that's the way I put it—I'd make him take me.

MRS. WEBB: M-m-m—What did he say? (Reaches for beans)

MRS. GIBBS: You know how he is. I haven't heard a serious word out of him, since I've known him. No, he said, it might make him discontented with Grover's Corners to go traipsin' about Europe; better let well enough alone, he says. Every two years he makes a trip to the battlefields of the Civil War and that's enough treat for anybody, he says.

MRS. WEBB: Well, Mr. Webb just admires the way Doctor Gibbs knows everything about the Civil War. Mr. Webb's a good mind to give up Napoleon and move over to the Civil War, only Doctor Gibbs being one of the greatest experts in the country just makes him despair.

MRS. GIBBS: That's a fact, Doctor Gibbs is never so happy as when he's at Antietam or Gettysburg. The times I've walked over those hills, Myrtle, stopping at every bush and pacing it all out, like we were going to buy it.

MRS. WEBB: Well, if that second-hand man's really serious about buyin' it, Julia, you sell it. And then you'll get to see Paris, all right. Just keep droppin' hints from time to time—that's how I got to see the Atlantic Ocean, y'know.

MRS. GIBBS: Oh, I'm sorry I mentioned it. Only it seems to me that once in your life before you die, you ought to see a country where they don't talk in English and don't even want to.

## Audition Scene 4: SAM CRAIG and JOE STODDARD

SAM: Good afternoon, Joe Stoddard.

JOE: Good afternoon, good afternoon. Let me see now: do I know you?

SAM: I'm Sam Craig.

JOE: Gracious sakes' alive! Of all people! I shoulda knowed you'd be back for the funeral. You've been away a long time, Sam.

SAM: Yes, I've been away over twelve years. I'm in business out in Buffalo now, Joe—but I was in the East when I go news of my cousin's death, so I thought I'd combine things a little and come back and see the old home—You look well.

JOE: Yes, yes, can't complain—Very sad, our journey today, Samuel.

SAM: Yes. (Xing up a bit to glance at grave)

JOE: Yes, yes. I always say, I hate to supervise when a young person is taken. (SAM turns R glancing at gravestones, Xing to McCARTHY. JOE looks off L) They'll be here in a few minutes now. I had to come here early today—(Turns R.) my son's supervisin' at the home.

SAM: (As if reading stone. Reminiscing) Old Farmer McCarthy! I used to do chores for him after school. He had lumbago. (Xing slowly to L. of MRS. GIBBS, above her)

JOE: Yes, we brought Farmer McCarthy here a number of years ago now.

SAM: (After a glance at JOE, focuses on SIMON) He was the organist in church, wasn't he? Drank a lot, we used to say.

JOE: (Xing to L of SIMON, above him) Nobody was supposed to know about it. He'd seen a peck of trouble. (Glances L, confidentially) Took his own life, y'know?

SAM: Oh, did he?

JOE: Hung himself in the attic. They tried to hush it up, but of course it got around. Chose his own epitaph. You can see it there. It ain't verse exactly. (Turns L)

SAM: Why, it's just some notes of music—what is it?

JOE: (Xing slowly C, turning up coat collar) Oh, I wouldn't know. It was wrote up in the Boston papers at the time.

SAM: Why, this is my Aunt Julia—I'd forgotten that she'd—of course, of course!

JOE: (Xing R a bit) Yes, Doc Gibbs lost his wife two-three years ago—about this time. And today's another bad blow for him, too.

SAM: (Follows) Joe, what did she die of? My cousin. (Stops, opens umbrella)

JOE: Oh, didn't you know? Had some trouble bringing a baby into the world. 'Was her second, though. There's a little boy 'bout four years old.

## **Audition Scene 5: SIMON STIMSON**

SIMON STIMSON conducts the CHOIR, a long-faced man in his early 30s, now slightly drunk. SIMON: (As verse ends) All right, now do it again. And remember, ladies, music came into the

world to give pleasure. Now try it again.

CHOIR starts again, with increasing volume. At the end of the second phrase.

SIMON: (Gently) Softer— (They still increase volume, and he suddenly becomes furious) Softer! (CHOIR stops) Now look here, everybody, get it out of your head that music's only good when it's loud. You leave loudness to the Methodists. You couldn't beat 'em, even if you wanted to. Now again, tenors!

CHOIR sing three verses of "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds"

SIMON: That's better; but it ain't no miracle. 'Fore I forget it: How many of you'll be able to come in Tuesday afternoon and sing at Fred Hersey's wedding? --Show your hands.

(CHOIR raises hands.) That'll be fine. That'll be right nice. Once again now: "Art thou weary, art thou languid?" It's a question, ladies and gentlemen. Make it talk. And remember Sunday to take the second verse real soft and sort of die out at the end. Ready?

## **Audition Scene 6: GEORGE and REBECCA**

GEORGE: (As she is halfway up the ladder) Get out, Rebecca. There's only room for one at this window.

REBECCA: (At the moon) Well, let me look just a minute.

GEORGE: Use your own window.

REBECCA: I did; but there's no moon there—George, do you know what I think, do you? I think maybe the moon's getting nearer and nearer and there'll be a big 'splosion.

GEORGE: Rebecca, you don't know anything. If the moon were getting nearer, the men that sit up all night with telescopes would see it first and they'd tell us about it, and it'd be in all the newspapers. (Pause)

REBECCA: George, is the moon shining on South America, Canada and half the whole world? GEORGE: Well-prob'ly is.

REBECCA: (When he is off, looking at moon, throughout) I never told you about that letter Jane Crofut got from her minister when she was sick. He wrote Jane a letter and on the envelope the address was like this: It said: "Jane Crofut; The Crofut Farm; Grover's Corners; Sutton County; New Hampshire; United States of America."

GEORGE: What's funny about that?

REBECCA: (With increasing awe) But listen, it's not finished: the United States of America; Continent of North America; Western Hemisphere; the Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God—that's what it said on the envelope.

GEORGE: What do you know!

REBECCA: Yep, and the postman brought it just the same.

GEORGE: What do you know! (Pause)

## **Audition Scene 7: MRS. SOAMES and MRS. GIBBS**

MRS. SOAMES: (Scandalized) Well, naturally I didn't want to say a word about it in front of those others (looks off rear L), but now that we're alone, really, it's the worst scandal that ever was in this town!

MRS. GIBBS: What?

MRS. SOAMES: Simon Stimson! (MRS. WEBB turns half R, annoyed)

MRS. GIBBS: Now, Louella!

MRS. SOAMES: But, Julia! To have the organist of a church, drink, and drunk year after year. MRS. GIBBS: Louella!

MRS. SOAMES: Julia, you know he was drunk tonight.

MRS. GIBBS: (Looking at the moon) Now Louella! We all know about Mr. Stimson, and we all know about the troubles he's been through, and Doctor Ferguson knows too, and if Doctor Ferguson keeps him on there in his job the only thing the rest of us can do is just not to notice it. MRS. SOAMES: Not to notice it! But it's getting worse.

MRS. GIBBS: (Acidly) No, it isn't, Louella. It's getting better. I've been in that choir twice as long as you have. It doesn't happen anywhere near so often. My, I hate to go to bed on a night like this. Gracious, I'd better hurry. (Rushes off L) Those children'll be sittin' up till all hours. Can you get home safe, Louella?

MRS. SOAMES: (Xing L a step) Oh, it's as bright as day. I can see Mr. Soames scowling at the windows now. (Laughs at the thought) You'd think we'd been to a dance the way the men folk carry on! (BOTH laugh and start on their ways) Goodnight, Julia.

MRS. GIBBS: Goodnight, Louella.

MRS. SOAMES: See you on Sunday.



## **Audition Scene 8: HOWIE, MRS. GIBBS, MRS. WEBB**

HOWIE: Morning, Mrs. Gibbs. (Carries over a metal carrier containing milk bottles. Puts them down)

MRS. GIBBS: Good morning, Howie.

HOWIE: Too bad about the weather. It's been raining so heavy that maybe it'll clear up.

MRS. GIBBS: Certainly hope it will.

HOWIE: How much did you want today?

MRS. GIBBS: I'm going to have a houseful of relations, Howie. Looks to me like I'll need three- a-milk and two-a-cream.

(HOWIE hands her two bottles, setting 3 on doorstep)

HOWIE: Three a milk and two a cream. My wife says to tell you we hope they'll be happy— know they will.

MRS. GIBBS: (Calling after him) Thanks a lot, Howie. Tell your wife I hope she gets to the wedding.

(MRS. WEBB Xes down to doorway. MRS. GIBBS takes two bottles to cupboard, returns for the other three, then Xes to turn French toast, winking back tears.)

HOWIE: Maybe she kin. She'll get there if she kin. Good morning, M's Webb.

MRS. WEBB: Oh, good morning, Mr. Newsome. I told you four quarts of milk, but I hope you can spare me another.

HOWIE: Yes'm, and two a-cream. (Kneeling, hands her two bottles, sets four on doorstep) MRS. WEBB: (Looking up) Will it start raining again, Howie?

HOWIE: Well—I was just sayin' to M's Gibbs as how it may clear off. (Rises, takes rack) Mrs. Newsome told me special to tell you as how we hope they'll be happy, M's Webb —know they will.

MRS. WEBB: (Calling after him) Thank you, and thank Mrs. Newsome; and we're counting on seeing you at church.

HOWIE: Yes, M's Webb. We hope to git there all right. Couldn't miss that. Come on, Bessie!

## Audition Scene 9: MRS. WEBB and EMILY

MRS. WEBB: Hurry up, children! Seven o'clock. Now I don't want to call you again.  
(Turns to stove, facing up)

EMILY: (Softly, rueful) I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? (Xing to near mother, who turns down to putter at stove) Mama, I'm here! I'm grown up! I love you all, everything! I can't look at everything hard enough. (Looks to STAGE MANAGER) Can I go in? (Smiling in anticipation, she turns as if entering the kitchen, then beams at mother. Gently, as if a girl of 12) Good morning, Mama.

MRS. WEBB: (Xing to embrace and kiss her quickly) Well now, dear, a very happy birthday to my girl and many happy returns. (Returns to stove, slipping out of EMILY's embrace) There are surprises waiting for you on the kitchen table.

EMILY: (Terribly hurt by her mother's brevity, she forces a banality) Oh, Mama, you shouldn't have. (Upset, clasps her hands in agonized appeal) I can't! I can't!

MRS. WEBB: (Over her shoulder, dryly as usual) But birthday or no birthday, I want you to eat your breakfast good and slow. I want you to grow up and be a good strong girl. (EMILY looks over gifts) That in the blue paper is from your Aunt Carrie and I reckon you can guess who brought the postcard album. I found it on the doorstep when I brought in the milk—George Gibbs—must have come over in the cold pretty early—right nice of him.

EMILY: (Very gently, picking up album) Oh, George! I'd forgotten that—Oh!

MRS. WEBB: Chew that bacon good an' slow. It'll help keep you warm on a cold day.

EMILY: (Unable to stand longer her mother's aloofness. Moves quickly to L of MRS. WEBB. Passionately) Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama! Fourteen years have gone by! I'm dead! You're a grandmother, Mama—(More and more desperate) I married George Gibbs, Mama! —Wally's dead, too. —Mama! His appendix burst on a camping trip to Crawford Notch. We felt just terrible about it, don't you remember? (More gently and appealing) But, just for a moment now we're all together—Mama, just for a moment, let's be happy. Let's look at one another!

MRS. WEBB: (One step L, to put dish on table) That in the yellow paper is something I found in the attic among your grandmother's things. You're old enough now to wear it now, and I thought you'd like it.

EMILY: (Forcing her child's tone) And this is from you! Why, Mama, it's just lovely and it's just what I wanted! It's beautiful! (She flings her arms around her mother's shoulders. MRS. WEBB pats her hand, then turns away.)

MRS. WEBB: (Pleased) Well, I hoped you'd like it. (As she turns away, EMILY is again agonized) Hunted all over. Your Aunt Norah couldn't find one in Concord so I had to send all the way to Boston. (Laughs) Wally has something for you, too. (EMILY turns L, stretching arms toward upstairs to WALLY) He made it at Manual Training class and he's very proud of it. Be sure you make a big fuss about it. Your father has a surprise for you, too: don't know what it is myself. Sh—here he comes.

EMILY: (As she rushes up C) I can't! I can't go on! (Sobs a moment) It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. (She breaks down sobbing again, controls herself and looks off down L) I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed! (Half to STAGE MANAGER, Xing slowly down C) Take me back—up the hill—

to my grave. But first: wait! (Turns L) One more look! (Xing up LC. Gently) Goodbye! (Then passionately, her arms out flung) Goodbye, world! (Then lovingly, glancing at the town up L.) Goodbye, Grover's Corners—(Turns to look off down L., softly) Mama and Papa – (Turns a step C, eyes uplifted) Goodbye to clocks ticking—and my butternut tree! (Her eyes follow its trunk down and she moves loving toward it a step or two, then gestures toward the garden) and Mam's sunflowers— (Her head gradually raised as the thrill grows) and food and coffee—and new-ironed dresses and hot baths—(With increasing fervor) and sleeping and waking up! – (She flings her arms wide in an ecstasy of realization) Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anyone to realize you!

## Audition Scene 10: MR. WEBB and GEORGE

MR. WEBB: Well, George, how are you?

GEORGE: I'm fine. (Pause. Earnestly) Mr. Webb, what common-sense could there be in a superstition like that?

MR. WEBB: (Still half out) Well, George—on the wedding morning a girl's head is full of —oh, you know—clothes and—one thing and another. Don't you think that's probably it? (Dunks and eats)

GEORGE: I—uh—yes. I never thought of that.

MR. WEBB: A girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day.

GEORGE: (Stirring coffee) Gee, I wish a person could get married without all that marching up and down.

MR. WEBB: Every man that's ever lived has felt that way, George, but it hasn't been any use. It's the women-folk who've built up weddings, my boy. For a while now the women have it all their own. (Drinks from saucer) A man looks pretty small at a wedding, George. All those good women standing shoulder to shoulder, making sure that the knot's tied in a mighty public way. (Cuts food and eats)

GEORGE: (Earnestly) Well, you believe in it, don't you, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB: (Quietly) Yes. (With alacrity, suddenly looking at GEORGE) Oh, yes! Now, don't misunderstand me, George. Marriage is a wonderful thing. Don't you forget that, George. GEORGE: No, sir. (Pause) Mr. Webb, how old were you when you got married?

MR. WEBB: Well, you see—I'd been to college and I'd taken a little time to get settled. But Mrs. Webb, she wasn't much older than what Emily is. (Stirring coffee) Oh, age hasn't got much to do with it, George, compared with—other things. (Drinks)

GEORGE: What were you going to say, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB: I don't know. Was I going to say something? (GEORGE is confused.

Pause. MR. WEBB sits back, crosses knees, folds arms) George, I was remembering the other night the advice my father gave me when I got married. Yes, he said:

"Charles" he said: "start right off showin' who's boss. Best thing to do is give an order about something, even if it don't make sense, just so she'll learn to obey," he said.

(GEORGE is more perplexed, looks out throughout) Then he said, "If anything about her irritates you, her conversation or anything, get right up and leave the house; that'll make it clear to her." And, oh, yes, he said, "Never let your wife know how much money you have, never."

GEORGE: (Frightened and flabbergasted) Well, I couldn't exactly—

MR. WEBB: So I took the opposite of his advice and I've been happy ever since.

(GEORGE rests chin on L hand, completely puzzled. MR. WEBB smiles at his confusion. He has obviously invented the story.) So let that be a lesson to you never to ask the advice of anybody on personal matters.

## **Audition Scene 11: Stage Manager**

STAGE MANAGER: This play is called "Our Town." It was written by Thornton Wilder. The name of the town is Grover's Corners, New Hampshire – just across the Massachusetts line: latitude 42 degrees 40 minutes; longitude 70 degrees 37 minutes. The First Act shows a day in our town. The day is May 7, 1901. The time is just before dawn.

Well, I'd better show you how our town lies. Up here (that is: parallel to the back wall) – is Main Street. Way back there is the railway station; tracks go that way. Polish Town's across the tracks, and some Canuck families. (Toward the left) Over there is the Congregational Church; across the street's the Presbyterian. Methodist and Unitarian are over there. (off down right) Baptist is down in the holla' by the river. Catholic Church is over beyond the tracks. Here's the Town Hall and Post Office combined; jail's in the basement. Bryan once made a speech from these steps here. Along here's (Main Street, parallel with the back wall) a row of stores. Hitching posts and horse blocks in front of them. First automobile's going to come along in about five years – belonged to Banker Cartwright, our richest citizen . . . lives in the big white house up on the hill. Here's the grocery store and here's Mr. Morgan's drugstore. (Pointing right and left behind him) Most everybody in town manages to look into those two stores once a day. Public School's over yonder. High School's still farther over. Quarter of nine mornings, noontimes, and three o'clock afternoons, the hull town can hear yelling and screaming from those schoolyards. (He approach hes the table and chairs downstage right.)

This is our doctor' house,-Doc Gibbs'. This is the back door. (Two arched trellises, covered with vines and flowers, are pushed out, one by each proscenium pillar.) There's some scenery for those who think they have to have scenery. This is Mrs. Gibbs' garden. Corn . . . peas . . . beans . . . hollyhocks . . . heliotrope . . . and a lot of burdock. (Crosses the stage.) In those days our newspaper come out twice a week – the Grover's Corners Sentinel – and this is Editor Webb's house. And this is Mrs. Webb's garden. Just like Mrs. Gibbs', only it's got a lot of sunflowers, too. (He looks upward, center stage.) Right here's . . . a big butternut tree.