

GEORGE. Awfully sorry, Mrs. Forrest.

*(STAGE MANAGER smiles at audience and drifts off downstage. GEORGE turns shyly, peering around the Webb house to see if EMILY is there.)*

– Hello, Emily.

EMILY. *(shyly turning from trellis)* H'lo.

GEORGE. *(edging down, socking mitt with baseball)* You made a fine speech in class.

EMILY. Well...I was really ready to make a speech about the Monroe Doctrine, but at the last minute Miss Corcoran made me talk about the Louisiana Purchase instead. I worked an awful long time on both of them.

GEORGE. *(puts ball back in pocket, looks at own house)* Gee, it's funny, Emily. From my window up there I can just see your head nights when you're doing your homework over in your room.

*(BOTH face mostly front, shy throughout.)*

EMILY. *(pleased at his admission)* Why, can you?

GEORGE. You certainly do stick to it, Emily. I don't see how you can sit still that long. I guess you like school.

EMILY. Well, I always feel it's something you have to go through.

GEORGE. Yeah.

EMILY. I don't mind it really. It passes the time.

GEORGE. Yeah. – Emily, what do you think? We might work out a kinda telegraph from your window to mine; and once in a while you could give me a kinda hint or two about one of those algebra problems.

*(EMILY looks at him, shocked.)*

I don't mean the answers, Emily, of course not... just some little hint...

EMILY. Oh, I think *hints* are allowed. – So – ah – if you get stuck, George, you whistle to me; and I'll give you some hints.

GEORGE. Emily, you're just naturally bright, I guess.

EMILY. I figure that it's just the way a person's born.

GEORGE. Yeah. But, you see, I want to be a farmer, and my Uncle Luke says whenever I'm ready I can come over and work on his farm and if I'm any good I can just gradually have it.

EMILY. You mean the house and everything?

*(Enter MRS. WEBB with a large bowl and sits on the bench by her trellis.)*

GEORGE. Yeah. *(Pause. Gets ball out; edges away.)* Well, thanks...I better be getting out to the baseball field. Thanks for the talk, Emily. – Good afternoon, Mrs. Webb.

*(EMILY, wrapt in thoughts of GEORGE, looks after him.)*

MRS. WEBB. Good afternoon, George.

GEORGE. So long, Emily.

*(crosses off, socking ball into mitt)*

EMILY. So long, George.

MRS. WEBB. Emily, come and help me string these beans for the winter.

*(EMILY sits and helps.)*

George Gibbs let himself have a real conversation, didn't he? Why, he's growing up. How old would George be?

EMILY. *(coming out of trance, protesting too much)* I don't know.

MRS. WEBB. Let's see. He must be almost sixteen.

EMILY. *(changing the subject)* Mama, I made a speech in class today and I was very good.

MRS. WEBB. You must recite it to your father at supper. What was it about?