

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?

EMILY. The Louisiana Purchase. It was like silk off a spool. I'm going to make speeches all my life. *(holding up a bean in both hands)* – Mama, are these big enough?

MRS. WEBB. Try and get them a little bigger if you can.

EMILY. Mama, will you answer me a question, serious?

MRS. WEBB. Seriously, dear – not serious.

EMILY. Seriously, – will you?

MRS. WEBB. Of course, I will.

EMILY. *(after a brief pause, expectantly)* Mama, am I good looking?

MRS. WEBB. *(steals a quick look at her)* Yes, of course you are. All my children have got good features; I'd be ashamed if they hadn't.

EMILY. Oh, Mama, that's not what I mean. What I mean is: am I *pretty*?

MRS. WEBB. I've already told you, yes. Now that's enough of that. You have a nice young pretty face. I never heard of such foolishness.

EMILY. Oh, Mama, you never tell us the truth about anything.

MRS. WEBB. I *am* telling you the truth.

EMILY. *(wheedling a bit)* Mama, were *you* pretty?

MRS. WEBB. Yes, I was, if I do say it. I was the prettiest girl in town next to Mamie Cartwright.

EMILY. But, Mama, you've got to say *something* about me. Am I pretty enough...to get anybody...to get people interested in me?

MRS. WEBB. *(turning on her, firmly)* Emily, you make me tired. Now stop it. You're pretty enough for all normal purposes. *(rises, taking bowl with her)* – Come along now and bring that bowl with you. *(She exits through trellis.)*

EMILY. *(picking up bowl from floor and following)* Oh, Mama, you're no help at all.