

*(They all exchange good nights. She hurries downstage, enters her house and disappears.)*

!< (EMILY, as MRS. WEBB passes her, excitedly blows out – i.e., switches off – the light that shines on her face from the ladder-shelf, and again gazes at the moon.)

MRS. GIBBS. Can you get home safe, Louella?

MRS. SOAMES. It's as bright as day. I can see Mr. Soames scowling at the window now. *(laughs at the thought)* You'd think we'd been to a dance the way the menfolk carry on.

*(Both laugh and start on their ways.)*

*(More good nights. MRS. GIBBS arrives at her home and passes through the trellis into the kitchen.)*

!< (GEORGE snaps off the light on his ladder-shelf as his mother goes by.)

MRS. GIBBS. Well, we had a real good time.

DR. GIBBS. *(looks at pocketwatch)* You're late enough.

MRS. GIBBS. Why, Frank, it ain't any later 'n usual.

DR. GIBBS. And you stopping at the corner to gossip with a lot of hens.

MRS. GIBBS. Now, Frank, don't be grouchy. Come out and smell the heliotrope in the moonlight.

*(He puts book reluctantly on the table and rises.*

*They stroll out arm in arm along the footlights.)*

♪ (A bobwhite calls three times. They speak quietly.)

Isn't that wonderful?

*(They stop to survey the moonlit scene out front.)*

What did you do all the time I was away?

DR. GIBBS. *(interested, though he tries to disapprove)* Oh, I read – as usual. What were the girls gossiping about tonight?

MRS. GIBBS. Well, believe me, Frank – there is something to gossip about.

DR. GIBBS. Hmm! Simon Stimson far gone, was he?

MRS. GIBBS. Worst I've ever seen him. How'll that end, Frank? Dr. Ferguson can't forgive him forever.

DR. GIBBS. I guess I know more about Simon Stimson's affairs than anybody in this town. Some people ain't made for small-town life. I don't know how that'll end; but there's nothing we can do but just leave it alone. *(pause)* Come, get in.

MRS. GIBBS. No, not yet...Frank, I'm worried about you.

DR. GIBBS. *(smiling)* What are you worried about?

MRS. GIBBS. I think it's my duty to make plans for you to get a real rest and change. And if I get that legacy, well, I'm going to insist on it.

DR. GIBBS. Now, Julia, there's no sense in going over that again.

MRS. GIBBS. Frank, you're just *unreasonable!*

DR. GIBBS. *(pats her back, pushes her, pouting, into the house)* Come on, Julia, it's getting late. First thing you know you'll catch cold. I gave George a piece of my mind tonight.

*(Turns inside trellis to close door. MRS. GIBBS picks up string from floor and, winding it up, goes to cupboard to leave it.)*

I reckon you'll have your wood chopped for a while anyway. No, no, start getting upstairs.

MRS. GIBBS. Oh, dear. There's always so many things to pick up, seems like. You know, Frank, Mrs. Fairchild always locks her front door every night.

*(MRS. GIBBS starts upstairs and off.)*

All those people up that part of town do.

o' DR. GIBBS. *(blowing out the lamp)* They're all getting citified, that's the trouble with them. They haven't got nothing fit to burgle and everybody knows it.

*(They disappear.)*