

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?