

(MR. WEBB shakes the snow off his feet and enters his house. CONSTABLE WARREN goes off, right.)

MR. WEBB. Good morning, Mother. (removes his hat and coat)

MRS. WEBB. How did it go, Charles?

MR. WEBB. Oh, fine, I guess. I told'm a few things. – Everything all right here?

MRS. WEBB. Yes – can't think of anything that's happened, special. Been right cold. Howie Newsome says it's ten below over to his barn.

MR. WEBB. Yes, well, it's colder than that at Hamilton College. Students' ears are falling off. It ain't Christian. – Paper have any mistakes in it?

MRS. WEBB. None that I noticed. Coffee's ready when you want it. (He starts upstairs.) Charles! Don't forget, it's Emily's birthday. Did you remember to get her something?

MR. WEBB. (patting his pocket) Yes, I've got something here. (calling up the stairs) Where's my girl? Where's my birthday girl?

(He goes off left.)

MRS. WEBB. Don't interrupt her now, Charles. You can see her at breakfast. She's slow enough as it is. Hurry up, children! It's seven o'clock. Now, I don't want to call you again. (She turns to pare potatoes at table near stove.)

EMILY. (softly, more in wonder than in grief) I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? Mama, I'm here. I'm grown up. I love you all, everything. – I can't look at everything hard enough.

(She looks questioningly at the STAGE MANAGER, saying or suggesting: "Can I go in?" He nods briefly. She crosses to the inner door to the kitchen, left of her mother, and as though entering the room, says, suggesting the voice of a girl of twelve:)