

STAGE MANAGER. Well, – *(He claps his hands as a signal.)*
Now we're ready to get on with the wedding.

1/-
O- *(Immediately the lights, except a pinspot which covers him, fade out.)*

draw red curtain?

(He stands waiting while the set is prepared for the next scene.)

(STAGEHANDS remove the chairs, tables and trellises from the Gibbs and Webb houses.)

(They arrange more chairs, facing up, on either side of the aisle, in close formation to suggest the pews of a church. The congregation will sit facing the back wall. The aisle of the church starts at the center of the back wall and comes toward the audience.)

(A small platform is placed against the back wall on which the STAGE MANAGER will stand later, playing the minister.)

1/-
O- *(The image of a stained-glass window is cast upon the back wall.)*

(When all is ready the STAGE MANAGER strolls to the center of the stage, down front, and, musingly, addresses the audience.)

STAGE MANAGER. There are a lot of things to be said about a wedding; there are a lot of thoughts that go on during a wedding. We can't get them all into one wedding, naturally, and especially not into a wedding at Grover's Corners, where they're awfully plain and short. In this wedding I play the minister. That gives me the right to say a few more things about it. For a while now, the play gets pretty serious. Y'see, some churches say that marriage is a sacrament. I don't quite know what that means, but I can guess. Like Mrs. Gibbs said a few minutes ago: People were made to live two-by-two. This is a good wedding, but people are so put together that even at a good wedding there's

a lot of confusion way down deep in people's minds and we thought that that ought to be in our play, too. The real hero of this scene isn't on the stage at all, and you know who that is. It's like what one of those European fellas said: every child born into the world is nature's attempt to make a perfect human being. Well, we've seen nature pushing and contriving for some time now. We all know that nature's interested in quantity; but I think she's interested in quality, too, – that's why I'm in the ministry. And don't forget all the other witnesses at this wedding, – the ancestors. Millions of them. Most of them set out to live two-by-two, also. Millions of them. Well, that's all my sermon. 'Twan't very long, anyway. *(Turning upstage, he walks up the church aisle.)*

open red curtain



(The organ starts playing Handel's "Largo".)

(The congregation streams into the church and sits in silence.)

(Church bells are heard.)

(MRS. GIBBS sits in the front row, the first seat on the aisle, the right section; next to her are REBECCA and DR. GIBBS.)

(Across the aisle MRS. WEBB, WALLY and MR. WEBB. A small choir takes its place, facing the audience under the stained-glass window.)

(MRS. WEBB, on the way to her place, turns back and speaks to the audience.)

MRS. WEBB. I don't know why on earth I should be crying. I suppose there's nothing to cry about. It came over me at breakfast this morning; there was Emily eating her breakfast as she's done for seventeen years and now she's going off to eat it in someone else's house. I suppose that's it. And