

## THEATRE IB OUR TOWN monologues

### MRS. WEBB

Children! Now I won't have it. Breakfast is just as good as any other meal, and I won't have you gobbling like wolves. It'll stunt your growth – that's a fact. Put away your books. You know the rules as well as I do – no books at the table. As for me, I'd rather have my children healthy than bright. I will speak to your father about your allowance when he's rested. Seems to me twenty-five cents a week's enough for a boy your age. I declare I don't know how you spend it all. And a very happy birthday to my girl and many happy returns. There are some surprises waiting for you on the kitchen table. But birthday or no birthday, I want you to eat your breakfast good and slow. I want you to grow up and be a good strong girl. That in the blue paper is from your Aunt Carrie, and I reckon you can guess who brought the post-card album. I found it on the doorstep when I brought in the milk. George brother must have come over in the cold pretty early...right nice of him. Chew that bacon good and slow. It will keep you warm on a cold day.

### MRS. GIBBS

Myrtle, did one of those second-hand furniture men from Boston come to see you last Friday? Well, he called on me. First I thought he was a patient wantin' to see Dr. Gibbs. 'N he wormed his way into my parlor, and Myrtle Webb, he offered me three hundred and fifty dollars for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here. Why, it was so big I didn't know where to put it, and I almost gave it to Cousin Hester. If I could get the Doctor to take the money and go away someplace on a real trip, I'd sell it like that. Y'know, Myrtle, it's been the dream of my life to see Paris, France. It sounds crazy, I suppose, but for years I've been promising myself that if we ever had the chance... But you know how he is. I haven't heard a serious word out of him since I've known him. No, he said, it might make him discontented with Grover's Corners to go traipsin' about Europe; better let well enough alone, he says. Every two years he makes a trip to the battlefields of the Civil War, and that's enough treat for anybody, he says.

### EMILY

I am not mad at you. I might as well say it right out, George. I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year. I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings, but I've got to tell the truth and shame the devil. Up to a year ago I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you as you did everything, because we'd been friends so long. And then you began spending all your time at baseball, and you never stopped to speak to anybody any more. Not even to your own family you didn't. And George, it's a fact, you've got awful conceited and stuck-up, and all the girls say so. They may not say so to your face, but that's what they say about you behind your back, and it hurts me to hear them say it, but I've got to agree with them a little. I'm sorry if it hurts your feelings, but I can't be sorry I said it. I always expect a man to be perfect, and I think he should be. My father is, and as far as I can see, your father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be too.

### EMILY

Mother Gibbs, George and I have made that farm into just the best place you ever saw. We thought of you all the time. We wanted to show you the new barn and a great long cement drinking fountain for the stock. We bought that with the money you left us. We have a Ford, too. Never gives any trouble. I don't drive, though. Live people don't understand, do they? They're sort of shut up in little boxes. I feel as though I knew them last a thousand years ago. When does this feeling go away? Of being one of them? I never realized before how troubled and how in the dark live persons are. Look at George. I loved him so. From morning till night, that's all they are...troubled. One can go back; one can go back there again...into the living. I feel it. I know it. Why just then for a moment. But I won't live over a sad day. I'll choose a happy day. I'll choose the day I first knew that I loved George. Why should that be painful?

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### MR. WEBB

George, a girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day. It's the women-folk who've built up weddings, my boy. For a while now the women have it all their own. A man looks pretty small at a wedding, George. All those good women standing shoulder-to-shoulder making sure that the knot's tied in a mighty public way. Don't misunderstand me, my boy. Marriage is a wonderful thing, a wonderful thing. And don't forget that, George. I was thinking the other night of some advice my father gave me when I got married. "Charles," he said, "Charles, start out early showing who's boss," he said. "Best thing to do is to give an order, even if it don't make sense; just so she'll learn to obey." And he said, "If anything about your wife irritates you, just up and leave the house. That'll make it clear to her," he said. "And, oh, yes!" he said, "Never, never let your wife know how much money you have, never!" So I took the opposite of my father's advice, and I've been happy ever since.

### GEORGE

Emily, I'm glad you spoke to me about that fault in my character. What you said was right; but here was one thing wrong in it, and that was when you said that for a year I wasn't noticing people, and you for instance. Why, you say you were watching me when I did everything. I was doing the same about you all the time. Why, sure. I always thought about you as one of the chief people I thought about. I always made sure where you were sitting on the bleachers, and who you were with, and for three days now I've been trying to walk home with you. But something's always got in the way. 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. You certainly do stick to it, Emily. I don't see how you can sit still that long. I guess you like school. 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 some of those algebra problems. I don't mean the answers, Emily, of course not...just some little hint. You're just naturally bright, I guess.

### DR. GIBBS

Well, George, while I was in my office today I heard a funny sound. And what do you think it was? It was your mother chopping wood. There you see your mother...getting up early; cooking meals all day long' washing and ironing; and still she has to go out in the back yard and chop wood. I suppose she just got tired of asking you. She just gave up and decided it was easier to do it herself. And you eat her meals, and put on the clothes she keeps nice for you, and you run off and play baseball...like she's some hired girl we keep around the house but that we don't like very much. Well, I knew all I had to do was call your attention to it. Here's a handkerchief, son. George, I've decided to raise your spending money twenty-five cents a week. Not, of course, for chopping wood for your mother, because that's a present you give her, but because you're getting older...and I imagine there are lots of things you must find to do with it.

### DR. GIBBS

Well, Ma, the day has come. You're losin' one of your chicks. The groom's up shaving himself – only there ain't an awful lot to shave. Whistling and singing, like he's glad to leave us. Every now and then he says, "I do" to the mirror, but it don't sound convincing to me. I was remembering my wedding morning. I was the scardest young fella in the state of New Hampshire. I though I'd make a mistake for sure. And when I saw you comin' down the aisle I thought you were the prettiest girl I'd ever see, but the only trouble was that I'd never seen you before. There I was in the Congregational Church marryin' a total stranger. I get a shock every time I think of George setting out to be a family man...that great gangling thing! I tell you, Julia, there's nothing so terrifying in the world as a son. The relation of father and son is the darndest, awkwardest...They'll have a lot of trouble, I suppose, but that's none of our business. Everybody has a right to their own troubles.