

begin? George and Emily are going to show you now the conversation they had when they first knew that—as the saying goes—they were meant for one another. But before they do that I want you to try and remember what it was like when you were very young, and particularly the days when you were first in love; when you were like a person sleep-walking, and you didn't quite see the street you were walking in, and you didn't quite hear everything that was said to you. You're just a little bit crazy. Will you remember that, please? Now they'll be coming out of High School at three o'clock. George has just been elected President of the Senior Class and as this is June, that means he'll be President of the Senior Class all next year. And Emily's just been elected Secretary and Treasurer. (*Young voices are heard off L. He starts R.*) Aya, there they are coming down Main Street now. (*Voices mount gaily, as STAGE MANAGER picks up board behind R. tormentor, Xes rear of table to place it across chair-backs left of table R. C., to serve as a soda-fountain, then brings on two stools to place behind board. Exits down R.*)

EMILY. (*Xing from down L. to up L., speaking off L., as voices die out. She carries books under L. arm*) I can't, Louise, I gotta go home. Goodbye. (*Turns, facing down L.*) Oh, Ernestine! Ernestine! Can you come over tonight and do Latin?—Isn't that Cicero the worst thing?—Well, tell your mother you have to. Goodbye. Goodbye, Helen, goodbye, Fred. (*Turns few steps to up L. C.*)

GEORGE. (*Xing up to her, books under R. arm*) Emily, can I carry your books home for you?

EMILY. (*Coolly*) Why—uh—thank you. It isn't far. (*GEORGE takes her books under his left arm, turns to speak off down L. EMILY is shy and embarrassed*)

GEORGE. 'Scuse me one minute, Emily, will

you?— (*Hurriedly*) Say, Bob, if I'm a little late, start practice, and give Herb some long high ones.

EMILY. (*Suddenly alert*) Goodbye, Lizzie.

GEORGE. (*Also to "LIZZIE", not enthusiastic*) Oh, goodbye. (*BOTH turn and stroll to up C., GEORGE above, BOTH shy*) I'm awful glad you were elected too, Emily.

EMILY. (*Coldly*) Thank you. (*Stops up C. facing down. He stops R. of her*)

GEORGE. (*Hurt*) Emily, why are you mad at me?

EMILY. (*Defensive*) I'm not mad at you.

GEORGE. You've been treating me so funny lately.

EMILY. (*Dreading to face the issue*) Well, since you ask me, I might as well say it right out, George— (*Turns to him, catches sight of TEACHER, who has passed above to their R.*) Oh, goodbye, Miss Corcoran. (*Faces down again*)

GEORGE. (*Turning, then back*) Goodbye, Miss Corcoran.—Wha-what is it?

EMILY. (*Finding it very hard to say*) I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year. (*GEORGE turns R. a bit, hurt. She glances at him*) I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings; but I've just got to—tell the truth and shame the devil.

GEORGE. —A change?—Wha-what do you mean?

EMILY. (*Facing mostly out, on verge of tears*) Well, up to a year ago, I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you while you did everything—because we'd been friends so long. And then you began spending all your time at baseball. (*She bites the word*) And you never stopped to speak to anybody any more—not to really speak—not even to your own family, you didn't. And George, it's a fact—ever since you've been elected Captain, you've got awful stuck up and conceited, and all the girls say so. And it hurts me to hear 'em say it; but I got to agree with 'em a little, because it's true.

GEORGE. (*Helpless and hurt*) Gosh, Emily—I

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never thought that such a thing was happening to me—I guess it's hard for a fella not to have *some* faults creep into his character.

EMILY. (*The complete prig*) I always expect a man to be perfect and I think he should be.

GEORGE. Oh, I—I don't think it's possible to be perfect, Emily.

EMILY. (*All innocence, yet firm*) Well, 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.

GEORGE. Well, I feel it's the other way round; that men aren't naturally good, but girls *are*.

EMILY. Well, you might as well know right now that *I'm* not perfect.—It's not as easy for a girl to be perfect as a man, because, well, we girls are more—nervous— (*Her face controls and she turns L.*) Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it. (*Cries.*)

GEORGE. (*Choked voice*) Emily—

EMILY. Now I can see it's not the truth at all. And I suddenly feel that it's not important, anyway. (*Cries harder, hands to eyes*)

GEORGE. Emily—would you like an ice-cream soda, or something, before you go home?

EMILY. (*Controlling self*) Well, thank you—I—I would. (*GEORGE starts to take her arm, but is too shy. They start slowly down and turn into the drug-store R. C.*) ← END

GEORGE. (*Over his emotions, as they walk, first gruffly, then courteously*) Hello, Stew, how are you?— Good afternoon, Mrs. Slocum. (*He starts R. into store, then steps back to let her go first*) (*EMILY Xes him to R. stool. GEORGE Xes to left end of board, puts books on it.*)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Enters down R., wearing glasses as MR. MORGAN, Xes to R. end of board*) Hello, George. Hello Emily. What'll you have?— Why, Emily Webb, what you been cryin' about?

GEORGE. (*Quickly Xing to her side as she looks to him for help*) She got an awful scare, Mr. Morgan. That—that hardware-store wagon almost ran over her. Everybody says Tom Huckins drives like a crazy man. (*EMILY nods agreement*)

STAGE MANAGER. (*Xing down R. to draw water*) Here, take a good drink-a-water, Emily. (*EMILY and GEORGE sit on stools, respectively R. and L. embarrassed. BOTH looking front*) You look all shook up. I tell you, you got to look both ways before you cross Main Street these days. (*Sets glass before her, She sips*) Gets worse every year— What'll you have?

EMILY. (*Hardly able to speak*) I'll have a strawberry phosphate, Mr. Morgan.

GEORGE. No, no, Emily—have a soda with me.

EMILY. Well,—

GEORGE. Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, Mr. Morgan.

STAGE MANAGER. (*Xing down R., facing out, as he mixes two sodas*) Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, yes sir. Yes, sir,—I want to tell you,—there are two hundred and twenty-five horses in Grover's Corners this minute I'm talking to you. (*GEORGE and EMILY face front through all this, she with tears in eyes, he very upset*) State Inspector was in here yestiddy. And now they're bringing in these auto-mo-biles, best thing to do is just stay home. Why I can remember when dogs used to sleep in the middle of the street all day, and nothing ever come to disturb'm. (*Sets sodas before them*) There you are! (*Sees someone off down R.*) Yes, Mrs. Ellis, be with you in a minute. What can I do for you? (*Exits down R.*)

EMILY. (*Awed*) They're so expensive. (*Sips through straw*)

GEORGE. No, no—don't you think of that, Emily.