

OUR TOWN CHARACTER SIDES

1. **EMILY WEBB** – Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama! Fourteen years have gone by! – I'm dead! – You're a grandmother, Mama – I married George Gibbs, Mama! - Wally's dead too. – Mama! His appendix burst on a camping trip to Crawford Notch. We felt just terrible about it, don't you remember? – But, just for a moment now we're all together – Mama, just for a moment let's be happy – Let's look at one another! I can't! I can't go on! It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed! Take me back – up the hill – to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look! Oh, earth you're too wonderful for anyone to realize you! Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it – every, every minute?

2. **EMILY WEBB**-- 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. (pause, talking to her mother who does not hear her. She speaks with mounting urgency) Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, Mama. I married George Gibbs, Mama. Wally's dead, too. Mama, his appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it - don't you remember? But, just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment we're happy. Let's look at one another. (pause, looking desperate because she has received no answer. She speaks in a loud voice, forcing herself to not look at her mother) I can't. I can't go on. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. (she breaks down sobbing, she looks around) I didn't realize. All that was going on in life and we never noticed. Take me back - up the hill - to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Goodby, Good-by, world. Good-by, Grover's Corners? Mama and Papa. Good-bye to clocks ticking? and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths? and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you. (she asks abruptly through her tears) Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? - every, every minute? (she sighs) I'm ready to go back. I should have listened to you. That's all human beings are! Just blind people.

3. **EMILY WEBB**--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 out of the money you left us. Don't you remember, Mother Gibbs - the legacy you left us? Why, it was over three hundred and fifty dollars. Well, there's a patent device on the drinking fountain so that it never overflows, mother Gibbs, and it never sinks below a certain mark they have there. It's fine. (Her voice trails off and her eyes return to the funeral group) It won't be the same to George without me, but it's a lovely farm. (pause, she looks directly at Mrs. Gibbs) Live people don't understand, do they? They're sort of shut up in little boxes, aren't they? I feel as though I know them. Mother Gibbs, when does this feeling go away? - Of being? one of them? How long does it?? I never realized before how troubled and how? how in the dark live persons are. From morning till night, that's all they are - troubled.

4. **GEORGE GIBBS** – I'm celebrating because I've got a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me. I'm glad you spoke to me like you did. But you'll see. I'm going to change. And Emily, I want to ask you a favor. Emily, if I go away to State Agricultural College next year, will you write me a letter? The day wouldn't come when I wouldn't want to know everything about our town. Y' know, Emily, whenever I meet a farmer I ask him if he thinks it's important to go to Agricultural School to be a good farmer. And some of them say it's even a waste of time. And like you say, being gone all that time – in other places, and meeting other people. I guess new people probably aren't any better than old ones. Emily – I feel that you're as good a friend as I've got. I don't need to go and meet the people in other towns. Emily, I'm going to make up my mind right now – I won't go. I'll tell Pa about it tonight.

5. **GEORGE GIBBS:** Emily, I'm glad you spoke to me about that---that fault in my character. What you said was right; but there was one thing wrong with it. That's where you said that I wasn't noticing---people---and you for instance---why, you say, you were watchin' me when I did everything---Why I was doin' 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 tried to walk home with you; but something always got in the way. Yesterday, I was standing over by the wall waiting for you and you walked home with Miss Corocan. Listen, Emily, I'm going to tell you why I'm not going to Agricultural School. I think once you've found a person you're very fond of---I mean a person who's fond of you, too, and likes you well enough to be interested in your character---Well, I think that is just as important as college is, even more so. That's what I think.

6. **MR. WEBB** – George, I was remembering the other night the advice my father gave me when I got married. Yes, he said “Charles,” he said “start right off showin’ who’s boss. Best thing to do is to give an order about something, even if it doesn’t make sense, just so she’ll learn to obey,” he said. Then he said, “If anything about her irritates you, her conversation or anything, get right up and leave the house; that’ll make it clear to her.” And oh yes, he said “Never let your wife know about how much money you have, never.” So I took the opposite of his advice and I’ve been happy ever since.

7. **DR. GIBBS** – 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 backyard 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.

8. **MRS. WEBB** – I don’t know why on earth I should be crying. I suppose there’s nothing to cry about. This morning at breakfast it came over me. There was Emily eating her breakfast as she’s done for seventeen years – and she’s going out of my house. I suppose that’s it – And Emily! She suddenly said, “I can’t eat another mouthful.” And she put her head on the table and she cried. Oh, I’ve got to say it – You know, there is something cruel about sending girls out into marriages like that. It’s – it’s cruel, I know; but I just couldn’t get myself to say anything – I went into it blind as a bat myself. The whole world’s wrong, that’s what’s the matter.

9. **SIMON STIMSON** – Yes, now you know. Now you know: that’s what it was to be alive. To move around in a cloud of ignorance; to go up and down trampling on the feelings of those – of those about you. To spend and waste time as though you had a million years. To be always at the mercy of one self-centered passion or another. Now you know – that’s the “happy” existence you wanted to go back to. Ignorance and blindness!

10. **LOUELLA SOAMES** – Perfectly lovely wedding! Loveliest wedding I ever saw. Oh, I do love a good wedding, don’t you? Doesn’t she make a lovely bride? Don’t know when I’ve seen such a lovely wedding. But I always cry; don’t know why it is, but I always cry. I just like to see young people happy. Don’t you? Oh I think it’s lovely! Aren’t they a lovely couple? Oh, I’ve never been to such a nice wedding. I’m sure they’ll be happy. I always say; Happiness – that’s the great thing. The important thing is to be happy.

11. **PROFESSOR WILLARD** -- Grover's Corners---mmm---let me see--- Grover's Corners lies on the old Pleisocene granite of the Appalachian range. I may say that it is some of the oldest land in the world--- we're very proud of that here. Of course, there are some more recent outcroppings,---sandstone, showing through a shelf of Devonian basalt, and some vestiges of Mezonic shale, but these are comparatively new---perhaps two or three hundred million years. Some highly interesting fossils have been found---I may say, unique fossils---two miles north of the Peckham Farm---in Silas Peckham's cow-pasture. These may be seen in the museum at the University at any time---that is any reasonable time. You say you would like some words on the history of man....some anthropological data---Early American stock, Cotahatchee tribes---no evidence before the 10th century of this era---now entirely disappeared---Oh,possible traces in three families---migration in early part of the 17th century of English brachiocephalic blue-eyed stock---Since then, some Slav and Mediterranean---ah--- our population here within the town limits is 2,640---pardon me, population at the moment is 2,642. The postal district brings in 507 more---making a total of 3,149. Mortality, birth rates--- constant. By McPherson's gauge:6,032....ah---thank you...thank you.