

“Our Town” Audition Scene Packet

September 9, 7pm: Open Auditions & Call-Backs

September 10, 7pm: Open Auditions & Call-Backs

23 Characters: 11-13 Men (flexible),10-12 Women (flexible)

Actors:1 Scene Cutting for Open Auditions. Additional audition readings and character matches will follow.

- No preparation is required, however actors are encouraged to be familiar with a posted cutting in advance (and the play), especially those interested in principle roles.
- Actors may partner up in advance to practice a cutting and then audition together and/or partners will be assigned at open call.
- Actors can choose any scene cutting for their first reading. Actors will be considered for all parts and not just the character read at open auditions. These scene samplings represent the principle roles only.

Audition Scene 1: JOE and DR. GIBBS

Audition Scene 2: GEORGE and EMILY

Audition Scene 3: MRS. WEBB and MRS. GIBBS

Audition Scene 4: MR. WEBB and STAGE MANAGER

Audition Scene 5: GEORGE and REBECCA

Audition Scene 6: MRS. SOAMES and MRS. GIBBS

Audition Scene 7: HOWIE, MRS. GIBBS, MRS. WEBB

Audition Scene 8: MRS. WEBB and EMILY

Audition Scene 9: MR. WEBB and GEORGE Audition

Audition Scene 10: STAGE MANAGER (choose one monologue)

Audition Scene 1: Joe and Dr. Gibbs

JOE: Mornin', Doc! (*Tosses paper onto a neighbor's veranda*)

DR. GIBBS: Mornin', Joe!

JOE: Want your paper now?

DR. GIBBS: Yes, I'll take it. (*JOE hands to DR. GIBBS, who opens it, starts reading it*)

JOE: Anybody been sick, Doc?

DR. GIBBS: No. Some twins over in Polish Town—Joe, I see your teacher Miss Foster is goin' to get married.

JOE: Yes, sir, to a feller over in Concord.

DR. GIBBS: I declare. Well, how do you boys feel about that?

JOE: Well, of course it ain't none of my business—but I think if a person starts out to be a teacher she ought to stay one. (*Starts L throwing papers.*)

DR. GIBBS: How's your knee, Joe?

JOE: Fine, Doc, I never think about it at all. Only like you said, it always tells me when it's going to rain.

DR. GIBBS: What's it telling you today? Goin' to rain?

JOE: No sir.

DR. GIBBS: Sure?

JOE: Yes sir.

DR. GIBBS: Knee ever make a mistake?

JOE: No sir.

Audition Scene 2: GEORGE and EMILY

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.*)

GEORGE: (*BOTH shy*) I'm awfully 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: (*Defensively*) I'm not mad at you.

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

EMILY: (*Dreading to face the issue*) Well, since you asked me, I might as well say it right out, George—(*Sees TEACHER, passing*) Oh, goodbye, Miss Corcoran. (*Faces down again*)

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

EMILY: (*Delicately*) I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year.

(*GEORGE turns R, a bit hurt.*) I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings; but I've just got to—tell the truth and shame the devil.

GEORGE: —A change? — What-what do you mean?

EMILY: (*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. 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 sense 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 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: 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 contorts and she turns L*) Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it. (*Cries harder, with hand to eyes.*)

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.*)

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 drugstore RC*)

Audition Scene 3: MRS. WEBB and MRS. GIBBS

MRS. GIBBS: Now, Myrtle, I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody, I'll burst.

MRS. WEBB: Why, Julia Gibbs!

MRS. GIBBS: Myrtle, did one of those second-hand furniture men from Boston come to see you last Friday?

MRS. WEBB: (*Reaches for bean, snapping ends off and putting in a bowl between them.*) No-o.

MRS. GIBBS: Well, he called on me. First I thought he was a patient wantin' to see Doctor Gibbs. He wormed his way into my parlor, and he offered me \$350 for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here!

MRS. WEBB: Why, Julia Gibbs! (*Continues work*)

MRS. GIBBS: (*Continues work*) He did! That old thing! Why, it was so big I didn't know where to put it and I almost gave it to Cousin Hester Wilcox.

MRS. WEBB: Well, you're going to take it, aren't you?

MRS. GIBBS: I don't know.

MRS. WEBB: You don't know!—Three hundred and fifty dollars? What's come over you?

MRS. GIBBS: Well, if I could get the Doctor to take the money and go away some place on a trip I'd sell it like that. (*Stops work*) Y'know, Myrtle, it's been the dream of my life to see Paris, France. (*Glances slyly at MRS WEBB, who is shocked, then laughs, hand to face.*) Oh, I don't know. It sounds crazy, I supposed, but for years I been promising myself that if we ever had the chance—

MRS. WEBB: How's the Doctor feel about it?

MRS. GIBBS: Well, I did beat about the bush a little bit and said that if I got a legacy—that's the way I put it—I'd make him take me.

MRS. WEBB: M-m-m—What did he say? (*Reaches for beans*)

MRS. GIBBS: 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.

MRS. WEBB: Well, Mr. Webb just admires the way Doctor Gibbs knows everything about the Civil War. Mr. Webb's a good mind to give up Napoleon and move over to the Civil War, only Doctor Gibbs being one of the greatest experts in the country just makes him despair.

MRS. GIBBS: That's a fact, Doctor Gibbs is never so happy as when he's at Antietam or Gettysburg. The times I've walked over those hills, Myrtle, stopping at every bush and pacing it all out, like we were going to buy it.

MRS. WEBB: Well, if that second-hand man's really serious about buyin' it, Julia, you sell it. And then you'll get to see Paris, all right. Just keep droppin' hints from time to time—that's how I got to see the Atlantic Ocean, y'know.

MRS. GIBBS: Oh, I'm sorry I mentioned it. Only it seems to me that once in your life before you die, you ought to see a country where they don't talk in English and don't even want to.

Audition Scene 4: EDITOR WEBB and STAGE MANAGER

STAGE MANAGER: Mr. Webb is Publisher and Editor of The Grover's Corners Sentinel. That's our local paper, y'know. Have you any comments, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB: Very ordinary town, if you ask me. Little better behaved than most. Probably a lot duller. But our young people here seem to like it well enough: 90% of 'em graduating from High School settle down right here to live—even when they've been away to college.

STAGE MANAGER: Now, is there anyone in the audience who would like to ask Editor Webb any questions about our town?

WOMAN IN THE BALCONY: Is there much drinking in Grover's Corners?

MR. WEBB: Well, ma'am, I wouldn't know what you're call much. Sattidy nights the farmhands meet down in Ellery Greenough's stable and holler some. We've got one or two town drunks, but they're always having remorse every time an evangelist comes to town. No, ma'am, I'd say likker ain't a regular thing in the home here, except in the medicine chest. Right good for snake-bit, y'know—always was.

MAN AT BACK OF AUDITORIUM: Is there no one in town aware of—?

MR. WEBB: Come forward, will you, where we can all hear you—what was it you wanted to ask?

MAN: (*Comes closer*) Is there no one in town aware of social injustice and industrial inequality? **MR. WEBB:** Oh, yes, everybody is—somethin' terrible. Seems like they spend most of their time talking about who's rich and who's poor.

MAN: Then why don't they do something about it?

MR. WEBB: (*Tolerantly*) Well, I dunno. I guess we're all huntin' like everybody else for a way the diligent and sensible can rise to the top and the lazy and quarrelsome sink to the bottom. But it ain't easy to find. Meantime, we do all we can to take care of those who can't help themselves and those that can we leave alone.

Audition Scene 5: GEORGE and REBECCA

GEORGE: *(As she is halfway up the ladder)* Get out, Rebecca. There's only room for one at this window.

REBECCA: *(At the moon)* Well, let me look just a minute.

GEORGE: Use your own window.

REBECCA: I did; but there's no moon there—George, do you know what I think, do you? I think maybe the moon's getting nearer and nearer and there'll be a big 'slosion.

GEORGE: Rebecca, you don't know anything. If the moon were getting nearer, the men that sit up all night with telescopes would see it first and they'd tell us about it, and it'd be in all the newspapers. *(Pause)*

REBECCA: George, is the moon shining on South America, Canada and half the whole world?

GEORGE: Well-prob'ly is.

REBECCA: *(When he is off, looking at moon, throughout)* I never told you about that letter Jane Crofut got from her minister when she was sick. He wrote Jane a letter and on the envelope the address was like this: It said: "Jane Crofut; The Crofut Farm; Grover's Corners; Sutton County; New Hampshire; United States of America."

GEORGE: What's funny about that?

REBECCA: *(With increasing awe)* But listen, it's not finished: the United States of America; Continent of North America; Western Hemisphere; the Earth; the Solar System; the Universe; the Mind of God—that's what it said on the envelope.

GEORGE: What do you know!

REBECCA: Yep, and the postman brought it just the same.

GEORGE: What do you know! *(Pause)*

Audition Scene 6: MRS. SOAMES and MRS. GIBBS

MRS. SOAMES: (*Scandalized*) Well, naturally I didn't want to say a word about it in front of those others (*looks off rear L*), but now that we're alone, really, it's the worst scandal that ever was in this town!

MRS. GIBBS: What?

MRS. SOAMES: Simon Stimson! (*MRS. WEBB turns half R, annoyed*)

MRS. GIBBS: Now, Louella!

MRS. SOAMES: But, Julia! To have the organist of a church, drink, and drunk year after year.

MRS. GIBBS: Louella!

MRS. SOAMES: Julia, you know he was drunk tonight.

MRS. GIBBS: (*Looking at the moon*) Now Louella! We all know about Mr. Stimson, and we all know about the troubles he's been through, and Doctor Ferguson knows too, and if Doctor Ferguson keeps him on there in his job the only thing the rest of us can do is just not to notice it.

MRS. SOAMES: Not to notice it! But it's getting worse.

MRS. GIBBS: (*Acidly*) No, it isn't, Louella. It's getting better. I've been in that choir twice as long as you have. It doesn't happen anywhere near so often. My, I hate to go to bed on a night like this. Gracious, I'd better hurry. (*Rushes off L*) Those children'll be sittin' up till all hours. Can you get home safe, Louella?

MRS. SOAMES: (*Xing L a step*) Oh, it's as bright as day. I can see Mr. Soames scowling at the windows now. (*Laughs at the thought*) You'd think we'd been to a dance the way the men folk carry on! (*BOTH laugh and start on their ways*) Goodnight, Julia.

MRS. GIBBS: Goodnight, Louella.

MRS. SOAMES: See you on Sunday.

Audition Scene 7: HOWIE, MRS. GIBBS, MRS. WEBB

HOWIE: Morning, Mrs. Gibbs. (Carries over a metal carrier containing milk bottles. Puts them down)

MRS. GIBBS: Good morning, Howie.

HOWIE: Too bad about the weather. It's been raining so heavy that maybe it'll clear up.

MRS. GIBBS: Certainly hope it will.

HOWIE: How much did you want today?

MRS. GIBBS: I'm going to have a houseful of relations, Howie. Looks to me like I'll need three-a-milk and two-a-cream.

(HOWIE hands her two bottles, setting 3 on doorstep)

HOWIE: Three a milk and two a cream. My wife says to tell you we hope they'll be happy—know they will.

MRS. GIBBS: *(Calling after him)* Thanks a lot, Howie. Tell your wife I hope she gets to the wedding.

(MRS. WEBB Xes down to doorway. MRS. GIBBS takes two bottles to cupboard, returns for the other three, then Xes to turn French toast, winking back tears.)

HOWIE: Maybe she kin. She'll get there if she kin. Good morning, M's Webb.

MRS. WEBB: Oh, good morning, Mr. Newsome. I told you four quarts of milk, but I hope you can spare me another.

HOWIE: Yes'm, and two a-cream. *(Kneeling, hands her two bottles, sets four on doorstep)*

MRS. WEBB: *(Looking up)* Will it start raining again, Howie?

HOWIE: Well—I was just sayin' to M's Gibbs as how it may clear off. *(Rises, takes rack)* Mrs. Newsome told me special to tell you as how we hope they'll be happy, M's Webb—know they will.

MRS. WEBB: *(Calling after him)* Thank you, and thank Mrs. Newsome; and we're counting on seeing you at church.

HOWIE: Yes, M's Webb. We hope to git there all right. Couldn't miss that. Come on, Bessie!

Audition Scene 8: MRS. WEBB and EMILY

MRS. WEBB: Hurry up, children! Seven o'clock. Now I don't want to call you again. (*Turns to stove, facing up*)

EMILY: (*Softly, rueful*) I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? (*Xing to near mother, who turns down to putter at stove*) Mama, I'm here! I'm grown up! I love you all, everything! I can't look at everything hard enough. (*Looks to STAGE*

MANAGER) Can I go in? (*Smiling in anticipation, she turns as if entering the kitchen, then beams at mother. Gently, as if a girl of 12*) Good morning, Mama.

MRS. WEBB: (*Xing to embrace and kiss her quickly*) Well now, dear, a very happy birthday to my girl and many happy returns. (*Returns to stove, slipping out of EMILY's embrace*) There are surprises waiting for you on the kitchen table.

EMILY: (*Terribly hurt by her mother's brevity, she forces a banality*) Oh, Mama, you shouldn't have. (*Upset, clasps her hands in agonized appeal*) I can't! I can't!

MRS. WEBB: (*Over her shoulder, dryly as usual*) 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. (*EMILY looks over gifts*) That in the blue paper is from your Aunt Carrie and I reckon you can guess who brought the postcard album. I found it on the doorstep when I brought in the milk—George Gibbs—must have come over in the cold pretty early—right nice of him.

EMILY: (*Very gently, picking up album*) Oh, George! I'd forgotten that—Oh!

MRS. WEBB: Chew that bacon good an' slow. It'll help keep you warm on a cold day.

EMILY: (*Unable to stand longer her mother's aloofness. Moves quickly to L of MRS. WEBB.*

Passionately) 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—(*More and more desperate*) 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? (*More gently and appealing*) 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!

MRS. WEBB: (*One step L, to put dish on table*) That in the yellow paper is something I found in the attic among your grandmother's things. You're old enough now to wear it now, and I thought you'd like it.

EMILY: (*Forcing her child's tone*) And this is from you! Why, Mama, it's just lovely and it's just what I wanted! It's beautiful! (*She flings her arms around her mother's shoulders. MRS. WEBB pats her hand, then turns away.*)

MRS. WEBB: (*Pleased*) Well, I hoped you'd like it. (*As she turns away, EMILY is again agonized*) Hunted all over. Your Aunt Norah couldn't find one in Concord so I had to send all the way to Boston. (*Laughs*) Wally has something for you, too. (*EMILY turns L, stretching arms toward upstairs to WALLY*) He made it at Manual Training class and he's very proud of it. Be sure you make a big fuss about it. Your father has a surprise for you, too: don't know what it is myself. Sh—here he comes.

EMILY: (*As she rushes up C*) I can't! I can't go on! (*Sobs a moment*) It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. (*She breaks down sobbing again, controls herself and looks off down L*) I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed! (*Half to STAGE MANAGER, Xing slowly down C*) Take me back—up the hill—to my grave. But first: wait! (*Turns L*) One more look! (*Xing up LC. Gently*) Goodbye! (*Then passionately, her arms out flung*) Goodbye, world! (*Then lovingly, glancing at the town up L.*) Goodbye, Grover's Corners—(*Turns to look off down L., softly*) Mama and Papa — (*Turns a step C, eyes uplifted*) Goodbye to clocks ticking—and my butternut tree! (*Her eyes follow its trunk down and she moves loving toward it a step or two, then gestures toward the garden*) and Mam's sunflowers— (*Her head gradually raised as the thrill grows*) and food and coffee—and new-ironed dresses and hot baths—(*With increasing fervor*) and sleeping and waking up! — (*She flings her arms wide in an ecstasy of realization*) Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anyone to realize you!

Audition Scene 9: MR. WEBB and GEORGE

MR. WEBB: Well, George, how are you?

GEORGE: I'm fine. *(Pause. Earnestly)* Mr. Webb, what common-sense could there be in a superstition like that?

MR. WEBB: *(Still half out)* Well, George—on the wedding morning a girl's head is full of—oh, you know—clothes and—one thing and another. Don't you think that's probably it? *(Dunks and eats)*

GEORGE: I—uh—yes. I never thought of that.

MR. WEBB: A girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day.

GEORGE: *(Stirring coffee)* Gee, I wish a person could get married without all that marching up and down.

MR. WEBB: Every man that's ever lived has felt that way, George, but it hasn't been any use. It's the women-folk who've built up weddings, my boy. For a while now the women have it all their own. *(Drinks from saucer)* 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. *(Cuts food and eats)*

GEORGE: *(Earnestly)* Well, you believe in it, don't you, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB: *(Quietly)* Yes. *(With alacrity, suddenly looking at GEORGE)* Oh, yes! Now, don't misunderstand me, George. Marriage is a wonderful thing. Don't you forget that, George.

GEORGE: No, sir. *(Pause)* Mr. Webb, how old were you when you got married?

MR. WEBB: Well, you see—I'd been to college and I'd taken a little time to get settled. But Mrs. Webb, she wasn't much older than what Emily is. *(Stirring coffee)* Oh, age hasn't got much to do with it, George, compared with—other things. *(Drinks)*

GEORGE: What were you going to say, Mr. Webb?

MR. WEBB: I don't know. Was I going to say something? *(GEORGE is confused. Pause. MR. WEBB sits back, crosses knees, folds arms)* 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 give an order about something, even if it don't make sense, just so she'll learn to obey," he said. *(GEORGE is more perplexed, looks out throughout)* 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 how much money you have, never."

GEORGE: *(Frightened and flabbergasted)* Well, I couldn't exactly—

MR. WEBB: So I took the opposite of his advice and I've been happy ever since. *(GEORGE rests chin on L hand, completely puzzled. MR. WEBB smiles at his confusion. He has obviously invented the story.)* So let that be a lesson to you never to ask the advice of anybody on personal matters.

Audition Scene 10: Stage Manager

1. STAGE MANAGER (male or female) - Three years have gone by. Yes, the sun's come up over a thousand times. Summers and winter have cracked the mountains a little bit more and the rains have brought down some of the dirt. Some babies that weren't even born before have begun talking regular sentences already; and a number of people who thought they were right young and spry have noticed that they can't bound up a flight of stairs like they used to without their heart fluttering a little. All that can happen in a thousand days. Nature's been pushing and contriving in other ways, too: a number of young people fell in love and got married. Yes, the mountain got bit away a few fractions of an inch; millions of gallons of water went by the mill; and here and there a new home was set up under a roof. Almost everybody in the world gets married- you know what I mean? In our town there aren't hardly any exceptions. Most everybody in the world climbs into their graves married.

2. STAGE MANAGER (MALE OR FEMALE)- Yes, an awful lot of sorrow has sort of quieted down up here. People just wild with grief have brought their relatives up to this hill. We all know how it is...and then time... and sunny days... and rainy days... 'n snow... We're all glad they're in a beautiful place and we're coming up here ourselves when our fit's over. Now there are some things we all know, but we don't take 'em out and look at 'em very often. We all know that something is eternal. And it ain't houses and it ain't names and it ain't earth, and it aint' even the stars...everybody knows in their bones that something is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years and yet you'd be surprised how people are always losing hold of it. There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being. (pause) You know as well as I do that the dead don't stay interested in us living people for very long. Gradually, gradually, they lose hold of the earth... and the ambitions they had ... and the pleasures they had ...and the things they suffered... and the people they loved. They get weaned away from earth—that's the way I put it, --weaned away. And they stay here while the earth part of 'em burns away, burns out: and all that time they slowly get indifferent to what's goin' on in Grover's Corners. They're waitin'. They're waitin' for something that they feel is comin'. Something important and great.