

# John Monologue

~~Good night, and same to you, John Peerybingle. Dark as pitch and weather worse than ever. Take care how you carry that box, Caleb. Let it fall, and I'll murder you.~~

~~Exit Tackleton and Caleb.~~

~~John looks at Dot. Dot looks at Edward. Edward stands up.~~

~~Edward~~

~~I beg your pardon, friends, but the party who was to call for me hasn't arrived. Given my infirmity, and the weather being as bad as before, would you, in your kindness, suffer me to rent a bed here?~~

~~Yes. Yes! Yes, certainly!~~

JOHN

~~Oh, well—I don't object—~~

~~Dot~~

~~Certainly, sir! I'll make you a bed directly. This way, sir!~~

*Dot leads Edward into the guest room. John is left alone. He puts away the mail bag; then collapses (quietly, because the baby is asleep) the table and puts it away. Sits down in the armchair. Looks at the table, where tea was spilled. Looks into the fire.*

JOHN

*To the audience.*

There were pictures in the fire that night. There were Dots – of all ages; young Dots who were running in the fields; newly-married Dots, entering, for the first time, this house; motherly Dots, with armful of babies; matronly Dots, watching Dots of daughters, who danced at the village balls; Dots, old, beset by troops of rosy grandchildren. There were images of John the Mail Carrier there, too; strong carriers, with heavy sackfuls of mail; and old carriers, still driving the cart; and sick old carriers, tended by the gentlest of hands; and graves of dead and gone old carriers, green in the churchyard. And the household gods got a hold of John's heart and made it happy and light, and the carrier thanked them with all his might and worried no more.

~~Dot walks out of the guest bedroom, also happy. She checks on the baby, the baby is asleep. She takes him carefully out of the crib and exits through the archway. Returns shortly, without the baby, and stands under the archway, smiling at John.~~

~~A single chirp of the cricket.~~

~~The carrier looks up, sees Dot, smiles at her, looks down at the fire.~~

~~Dots raises her hands and lets down her hair. Keeps looking at John.~~

~~Two chirps.~~

~~John looks up, sees Dot, and stands up. She takes him by the hand and they walk through the archway.~~

~~A single sustained note on the violin. Darkness.~~