

(JULIE exits into house.)

ENOCH

(Taking CARRIE to exit.)

Still lallygaggin'. You'd think a woman with nine children'd hev more sense.

CARRIE

If I hed more sense I wouldn't hev nine children!

(She crosses in front of ENOCH and exits. He follows.)

LOUISE

I wish I could go to New York.

ENOCH, JR.

→ What are you goin' to do after you graduate?

LOUISE

(Lowering her voice, as BILLY and FRIEND enter left.)

Listen, Enoch – ken you keep a secret?

(JUNIOR solemnly crosses his heart and spits.)

BILLY

(To HEAVENLY FRIEND.)

Can she see me?

1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND

Only if you want her to.

(They remain silent observers of the scene, BILLY standing by the trellis, 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND extreme downstage left.)

ENOCH, JR.

Well, what's the secret?

LOUISE

I'm goin' to be an actress. There's a troupe comin' through here next week. I met a feller – says he's the advance man, or somethin' – says he'll help me!

ENOCH, JR.

(Horried)

You mean run away?

(She puts her fingers to her lips to shush him. BILLY winces. 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND watches BILLY.)

I won't let you do it, Louise.

LOUISE

How'll you stop me?

ENOCH, JR.

I'll marry you. That's how. The hardest thing'll be to persuade Papa to let me marry beneath my station.

LOUISE

You needn't bother about marryin' beneath your station! I wouldn't have you. And I wouldn't have that stuck-up buzzard for a father-in-law if you give me a million dollars!

(BILLY looks at 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND and smiles, happy over this.)

ENOCH, JR.

(Outraged, hit in a tender spot.)

→ You're a fine one to talk about my father! What about yer own? A cheap barker on a carousel – and he beat your mother!

LOUISE

(Giving JUNIOR a good punch.)

You get out of here! You sleeky little la-de-da!

(Spins him around, gives him a well-directed kick. BILLY, seeing all this, puts out his foot and trips JUNIOR just as he is passing him.)

I'll – I'll kill you – you –

(JUNIOR runs out left. LOUISE suddenly turns, crosses to her chair, sinks on it, and sobs. BILLY looks over at LOUISE, who is very heartbroken little girl. He turns to the 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND.)

BILLY

If I want her to see me, she will?

(The 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND nods. BILLY approaches LOUISE timidly.)

Little girl – Louise!

(She looks up through her tears.)

LOUISE

Who are you?

BILLY

I... I...

(He's nearly as rattled as he was the night he suddenly faced BASCOMBE on the wharf.)

LOUISE

How did you know my name?

BILLY

Somebody told me you lived here. I knew your father.

LOUISE

My father!