

ACT I

Scene One: An Amusement Park On The New England Coast In May

*(The time is late afternoon. Extending from stage right to the center is a merry-go-round labeled "Mullin's Carousel." Below the merry-go-round, right center, is the stand of **BILLY BIGELOW**, the barker for the carousel. Left center is the ticket-seller's stand where **MRS. MULLIN** herself presides. Up on the extreme left is a platform backed by an ornate show tent occupied by "The Beauties of Europe." Below this platform, down left, is another stand occupied by the barker for the "Beauties." The two barker stands are elevated so that these two characters can be easily seen above the heads of the crowd. **MRS. MULLIN** is seated on a high stool behind her stand so that she is also visible at all times. Downstage extreme right is a Hoky Poky Ice Cream wagon; a **MAN** standing upstage from it is selling ice-cream cornucopias.)*

(NOTE: This scene is set to the music of a waltz suite. The only sound comes from the orchestra pit. The pantomimic action is synchronized to the music, but it is in no sense a ballet treatment.)

[MUSIC NO. 01 "PROLOGUE (THE CAROUSEL WALTZ)"]

(At measure 27 of the music the lights bleed through the scrim to reveal a tableau. At measure 50 the scrim rises and on the downbeat of measure 51 the entire scene comes to life. At rise: FISHERMEN, SAILORS, their WIVES, CHILDREN, GIRLS from the local mill, and other types of a coastal town are seen moving about the park, patronizing the various concessions and in general "seeing the sights." The carousel is in full motion as the curtain rises, the "Three Beauties of Europe" are dancing on the platform, a JUGGLER is busy juggling downstage left. BILLY is standing downstage of his stand and leaning against it, watching the proceedings. The whole stage seems to be alive and everyone is having a good time.)

(Almost immediately we see the JUGGLER cross to the center of the stage to spin a hat on one stick and a plate on the other. As he does this the carousel comes to a stop. The RIDERS descend from their horses and leave the platform in all directions to mill around with the crowd. The "Three Beauties of Europe" stop dancing. They slip into robes for their rest period. One KID on the carousel during all this movement has stubbornly clung to his horse, and neither his MOTHER nor his BIG SISTER can get him off. The SISTER, a tattle-tale type, skips happily across to her FATHER, who is talking to another gentleman. She pulls at his sleeve and points to her rebellious brother DAVID. MR. BASCOMBE, a formidable fellow with sideburns on his

*cheeks and a heavy gold watch-chain across his belly, starts out with his daughter to aid his wife against his recalcitrant son. When he gets there he stands in back of **DAVID, JR.** with that stern look he reserves for such occasions. That's all there is to it. **DAVID** knows the jig is up. He gets off the horse, and the family now walks across the stage with the pomp that befits the richest clan in the locality. They own the Bascombe Cotton Mills, "a little ways up the river." Several **PEOPLE** greet them with respectful awe, and they return a gracious but dignified bow to all.)*

*(The **JUGGLER**, center stage, has by this time stopped juggling and one of the **DANCERS** on the platform has come down and is passing a hat among the crowd for a little collection. As the **JUGGLER** goes back to his corner down left, we see a **GIRL** and a **SAILOR** enter from right. They cross down in front of **BILLY**, and as they pass him the **GIRL** turns to look at **BILLY**. She decides she wants to talk to him, so she crosses to her **SAILOR** friend and asks him to buy her some ice cream. The **SAILOR** crosses to the ice cream wagon to buy the cones, and as he does, the **GIRL** crosses to **BILLY** and talks to him. The **SAILOR**, having bought the cones, crosses back to the spot where he was, but sees no **GIRL**. He turns upstage, sees her flirting with **BILLY**. Crossing up between the two, he looks angrily at **BILLY**, turns to his **GIRL**, and tells her to hold the cones. She does. The **SAILOR** turns to **BILLY** and is just about to take a good sock at him when he notices that **BILLY** towers over him. **BILLY** smiles and the **SAILOR**'s look is now one of "I'd better leave this guy alone." He saunters off to the left*

*with his **GIRL. BILLY** then crosses up to **MRS. MULLIN**, as a small group of adoring young **FEMALES** follows his every movement with worshipful eyes. **MRS. MULLIN** is completely mollified by the little attention and gives him a nice big hug.)*

*(**CARRIE** and **JULIE** enter from down left [measure 227]. **CARRIE** is a naïve, direct, and normal young woman, of the period. **JULIE** is more complex, quieter and deeper. They look around at the gay sights, two mill girls on an afternoon off. **JULIE** crosses to right center. **CARRIE** is mixing in with the crowd left center when **BILLY** crosses to go back to his stand down right. On the way he nearly bumps into **JULIE**. Their eyes meet for a moment. Then he goes on.)*

*(About this time the **BARKER** of "The Beauties of Europe" comes out and gets on his stand and tries to attract the crowd by pointing to his weary **DANCERS**. But now **BILLY** starts his spiel [measure 235] and the entire stageful turns toward him and the carousel while **MRS. MULLIN**, the proprietress, beams above them. Everyone on the stage starts to sway unconsciously with the rhythm of **BILLY**'s words (unheard by the audience) [measure 251] - all but **JULIE**. **JULIE** just stands, looking at him over the heads of the others, her gaze steady, her body motionless. **BILLY** becomes conscious of her. He looks curiously at her. She takes his mind off his work. He mechanically repeats the spiel. The heads turned up at him now follow his eyes and turn slowly toward **JULIE**. This is also the direction of "The Beauties of Europe," and*

the enterprising barker of that attraction immediately takes advantage of this and starts his dancers dancing feverishly, doing bumps that they probably learned at Coney Island. The crowd is now completely "Beauty"-conscious. BILLY is JULIE-conscious and gets down off his stand. MRS. MULLIN, realizing the situation, runs over to BILLY and seems to shout at him.)

(BILLY comes to. His barker's pride reawakened, he mounts his stand and proceeds to win back his public. He starts his regular spiel. The GIRLS all turn back to BILLY and sway with his rhythm again. Some of the MEN go along with the "Beauties" – all except the ones whose WIVES pull them away.)

(When BILLY finishes, there is a stampede of GIRLS to buy tickets for the carousel. JULIE tries too, but she gets crowded out. BILLY notices this; pretty soon there will be no more places left. He smiles and with exaggerated gallantry walks over to her and offers his arm. With a frightened little grin she accepts it and he leads her grandly toward the carousel. MRS. MULLIN, her nose out of joint, yells at JULIE, motioning to her that she wants her five-cent fare.)

(JULIE fumbles in her purse. After some delay, occasioned by her excitement, she finally produces a nickel. Then MRS. MULLIN takes her time about giving her a ticket. In fact, she stalls until the carousel actually gets started. When she has her ticket, JULIE dashes back to the carousel. It is going slowly and she is afraid to get on. BILLY laughs and

suddenly lifts her up and puts her on the only remaining horse on the carousel.)

*(It must be understood that **BILLY**'s attitude to **JULIE** throughout the scene is one of only casual and laconic interest. He can get all the girls he wants. One is like another. This one is a cute little thing. Like hundreds of others.)*

*(Once he has got her on the carousel, he dismisses her from his mind. He turns back to **MRS. MULLIN**, but for some reason that lady gives him an icy glare. He shrugs his shoulders, looks again to the carousel, and collects the tickets from the people seated on the various animals. **JULIE** comes around again. He waves at her patronizingly. It means nothing to him. She waves back. It means so much to her that she nearly falls off! He laughs. The carousel is revolving faster now, but he hops on and leans against the horse on which **JULIE** is seated. **MRS. MULLIN**, seeing this, is so furious that she gets down from her stand and starts to pace the stage angrily. Great excitement is stirring down right. A group of **KIDS** herald the approach of a bear being led onstage by a ballerina in a short ruffly skirt. [The bear is a **SMALL MAN** in a well-made bearskin.].)*

*(Arriving stage center, the **GIRL** in the ruffly skirt executes a few dance steps. Then, to the great delight of all, the bear does exactly the same steps. A **CLOWN** now enters from down right, goes onstage next to the bear, and does some acrobatic tricks. The **JUGGLER** starts juggling again, the **DANCERS** dance. The entire stage is in a bedlam of excitement, the*

carousel keeps turning at full speed, BILLY is leaning closer to JULIE, the music rises in an ecstatic crescendo, but the lights, as if they sensed that we have accomplished all we wanted to in this scene, black out and the curtains close.)

[MUSIC NO. 02 "CHANGE OF SCENE"]