

Scene Six:
Outside A Schoolhouse, The Same Day

(AT RISE: The GRADUATING CLASS sits massed on three rows of benches. The GIRLS, all dressed alike in white, are seated on the first two benches. The BOYS, wearing blue serge suits, sit on the third bench. The BOYS who cannot be seated on the third bench are standing on the steps of the schoolhouse, behind the benches. Stage left is a bench standing at an angle. JULIE is seated on the downstage end of the bench, NETTIE is seated alongside of her. There are TWO OTHER PERSONS on this bench and other relatives of the graduating class are lined up behind it. Stage right, there is a small platform on which is a speakers' stand. Upstage of this stand, DR. SELDON is seated on a chair. MR. BASCOMBE is seated on a chair downstage of the stand. ENOCH and CARRIE and their entire family are standing downstage right. LOUISE is seated on the extreme left end of the first bench with the graduating GIRLS. As the lights come up, the PRINCIPAL is standing behind the speakers' stand. All are applauding and a YOUNG GIRL has just received her diploma. She goes up and joins the others.)

PRINCIPAL. Enoch Snow, Junior!

(ENOCH, JR. comes up. His applause is led by his not inconsiderable family – ENOCH, SR., CARRIE and his BROTHERS and SISTERS. They form a solid cheering section. As ENOCH, JR. returns to his place, one of his SISTERS sitting in the first row puts out her foot and trips him. He looks around, and she applauds vigorously. He walks on.)

BABY SISTER. Yah!

(CARRIE pulls her back in line with the rest of the family.)

PRINCIPAL. Miss Louise Bigelow.

(JULIE steps out and applauds. CARRIE claps her hands a few times, and there is not much more. LOUISE walks up, receives her diploma sullenly, and joins the group again. BILLY and the 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND have come in, down right, in time to see this.)

Our speaker this year is the most popular, best-loved man in our town – Dr. Seldon.

(The PRINCIPAL steps down from the speakers' stand and stands behind MR. BASCOMBE. DR. SELDON now takes his place on the stand. He adjusts his spectacles, and as he does so, BILLY speaks to the 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND.)

BILLY. Say! He reminds me of that feller up on the ladder.

1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND. Yes, a lot of these country doctors and ministers remind you of him.

DOCTOR SELDON. It's the custom at these graduations to pick out some old duck like me to preach at the kids.

(Laughter.)

I can't preach to you. Know you all too well. Brought most of you into the world. Rubbed liniment on yer backs, poured castor oil down yer throats.

(A shudder runs through them, and a GIRL laughs. All look at her and she is mortified.)

Well, all I hope is that now I got you this far, you'll turn out to be worth all the trouble I took with you!

(He pauses, looks steadily at them, his voice more earnest.)

I can't tell you any sure way to happiness. All I know is you got to go out and find it fer yourselves.

(BILLY goes over to LOUISE.)

You can't lean on the success of your parents. That's their success. *(Directing his words to LOUISE.)* And don't be held back by their failures! Makes no difference what they did or didn't do. You jest stand on yer own two feet.

BILLY. *(To LOUISE.)* Listen to him. Believe him.

(She looks up suddenly.)

DOCTOR SELDON. The world belongs to you as much as to the next feller. Don't give up! And try not to be skeered o' people not likin' you – jest you try likin' *them*. Jest keep yer faith and courage, and you'll come out all right. It's like what we used to sing every mornin' when I went to school. Mebbe you still sing it – I dunno.

[MUSIC NO. 31 "FINALE ULTIMO (YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE – REPRISE)"]

(He recites.) "When you walk through a storm keep yer chin up high..." *(To the KIDS.)* Know that one?

(They nod eagerly, stand and go on with the song.)

ALL. *(Very quietly.)*

AND DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK.

BILLY. *(To LOUISE.)* Believe him, darling! Believe.

(LOUISE stands, joining the others, who are standing as they sing. NOTE: At this point everyone on stage is standing except for JULIE.)

ALL.

AT THE END OF THE STORM
IS A GOLDEN SKY,
AND THE SWEET, SILVER SONG OF A LARK.

(BILLY crosses back of bench left and stands behind JULIE, who is now the only person sitting.)

WALK ON THROUGH THE WIND,
WALK ON THROUGH THE RAIN,
THOUGH YOUR DREAMS BE TOSSED AND BLOWN.

BILLY. *(To JULIE.)* I loved you, Julie. Know that I loved you!

(JULIE's face lights up, she stands as she starts singing with the rest.)

ALL (WITH JULIE).

WALK ON, WALK ON, WITH HOPE IN YOUR HEART,
AND YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE!

(LOUISE moves in closer to the group. Tentatively, she puts her arm around the GIRL to her right. Responding, the GIRL turns to LOUISE and smiles. LOUISE's eyes shine. The 1ST HEAVENLY FRIEND smiles and beckons BILLY to follow him. BILLY does. As they pass the DOCTOR, he watches and smiles wisely.)

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE.

The Curtain Falls

[MUSIC NO. 32 "EXIT MUSIC"]