

Uncle Henry # 1

13

ACT ONE — SCENE 3

Kansas.

MISS GULCH *astride her trusty bicycle clatters on-stage.*
SHE *circles the stage peering out into the audience intently, looking for culprits.*
SHE *suddenly spots* UNCLE HENRY *off-stage and screeches to a halt.*

MISS GULCH. Henry, Gale. Is that you skulking by the barn?

UNCLE HENRY *enters.*

UNCLE HENRY. I never skulked in my life Miss Gulch. And I ain't about to start now.

MISS GULCH *dismounts and leans her bicycle against the picket fence.*
UNCLE HENRY *holds open the gate for her. SHE passes through.*

MISS GULCH. I want to see you and your wife right away about Dorothy.

UNCLE HENRY. Dorothy? Why, what has Dorothy done?

MISS GULCH. What's she done? I'm all but lame from the bite on my leg!

UNCLE HENRY. You mean she bit you?

MISS GULCH. No, her dog!

UNCLE HENRY. Oh, she bit her dog, eh?

AUNT EM. *(Entering)* Afternoon Miss Gulch. I just made a fresh batch of cookies if you've a mind to sit awhile.

MISS GULCH. I'm afraid I have no appetite Mrs. Gale. Indeed I'm so shaken by the ferocious attack of your niece's vicious dog, I may never eat again.

UNCLE HENRY. If you don't eat, you'll waste away. And I'd hate to see you dwindle.

MISS GULCH *gives* UNCLE HENRY *a beady look while* AUNT EM *calls off.*

AUNT EM. Dorothy could you bring Toto out here a minute?
(Turns back to MISS GULCH) I'm sure if Dorothy's upset you in any way she'll be only too glad to apologize as best she can.

MISS GULCH. It's gone beyond apologizes, Mrs. Gale.
I have laid an official complaint with the County Sheriff.

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UNCLE HENRY. Was he sober?

*MISS GULCH gives UNCLE HENRY another look
as DOROTHY enters carrying TOTO.*

AUNT EM. Dorothy, Miss Gulch here seems very upset.

MISS GULCH. That dog's a menace to the community.

DOROTHY. That's not true.

MISS GULCH. As an act of public service, young woman,
I'm taking that dog to the Sheriff and make sure he's destroyed.

DOROTHY. Destroyed? Toto? Oh, you can't! You mustn't! Uncle Henry! Auntie Em!
You won't let her, will you?

UNCLE HENRY. Of course, we won't. Will we Em?

AUNT EM says nothing.

DOROTHY. Oh, please, Aunt Em! Toto didn't mean to. He didn't know he was doing
anything wrong. I'm the one that ought to be punished. You can send me to bed
without supper —

AUNT EM. You hear how sorry the child is.
Surely if she promises to give your place a wide berth ...

MISS GULCH. If you don't hand the dog over now, I'll bring a damage suit that'll
take your whole farm! There's a law protecting folks against dogs that bite!

AUNT EM. How would it be if she keeps him tied up? He's really gentle
— with gentle folk that is.

MISS GULCH. Well, that's for the Sheriff to decide. *(Produces a document
which she hands to UNCLE HENRY)* Here's his order allowing me to take him.
Unless you want to go against the law.

UNCLE HENRY studies the document.

UNCLE HENRY. Uh, yes —

AUNT EM. What's it say, Henry?

UNCLE HENRY. Just what she says. You gotta hand him over, Dorothy.

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stop

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