

ACT ONE — SCENE 3
MISS GULCH/UNCLE HENRY/AUNT EM/DOROTHY

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

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

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 a1 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 look while AUNT EM calls off.)

AUNT EM. Dorothy could you bring Toto out here a minute?

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.

UNCLE HENRY. Was he sober?

(MISS GULCH gives UNCLE HENRY another look as DOROTHY enters.)

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,1 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!1 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) Uh, yes —

AUNT EM. What's it say, Henry?

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

DOROTHY. No, I won't let you take him.

AUNT EM. We can't go against the law, Dorothy. I'm afraid poor Toto will have to go.

MISS GULCH. Now you're seeing reason.

DOROTHY. No! (DOROTHY hugs TOTO to her)

(Miss GULCH removes a basket from her bicycle.)

MISS GULCH. Here's what I'm taking him in, so he can't attack me again.

DOROTHY. No, no, no! I won't let you take him! You go away! Ooh, I'll bite you myself!

AUNT EM. Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Oh, you wicked old witch! Uncle Henry, Auntie Em, don't let 'em take Toto! Don't let her take him — please!

UNCLE HENRY. Let me have him, Dorothy.

DOROTHY. Oh please, please ...

UNCLE HENRY gently takes TOTO from her.

AUNT EM. Put him in the basket. Henry.

MISS GULCH. That's more like it.

DOROTHY. Oh, Toto!

(DOROTHY turns and sobs in AUNT EM'S arms.)

AUNT EM. Almira Gulch, just because you own half the county doesn't mean you have the power to run the rest of us! For twenty-three years I've been dying to tell you what I thought of you! And now... Well, being a Christian woman, I can't say it!

UNCLE HENRY. Well I can. So if you don't want to hear it, you better pedal your carcass offa my land.

MISS GULCH. I don't take kindly to that kind of talk. Henry Gale. (Climbs aboard her cycle.) Just remember, I have friends in high places. (Starts to pedal off with dignity.)

UNCLE HENRY. Then why don't you climb on your broomstick and go visit 'em. (Miss GULCH looks back angrily, loses her balance and wobbles off.)