

1-10-53

ACT I

Scene 10

TIME: That evening.

AT RISE: The PAROO's porch. MRS. PAROO is sitting on the porch rocking. WINTHROP is hiding behind her chair. HAROLD has entered at rise.

HAROLD

Mrs. Paroo, do you realize you have the facial characteristics of a cornet virtuoso?

MRS. PAROO

I don't know if I understand you entirely, Professor.

HAROLD

If your boy has that same firm chin, and those splendid cheek muscles -- By George! Not that he could ever be really great, you understand, but --

MRS. PAROO

Oh, is that so. And is the name of St. Bridget, why not?

HAROLD

Well -- you see all the really great cornet players were Irish -- O'Clark, O'Mendez, O'Klein --

MRS. PAROO

But Professor, we are Irish!

HAROLD

No! No! Really? That clinches it! Sign here, Mrs. Paroo. Your boy was born to play the cornet!

(SHE signs in a daze. WINTHROP has followed her and is still hiding behind her)

Fine, fine. That will be seven dollars earnest money. Nothing more due until the first installment payable at opening of band practice.

(MRS. PAROO locates money from about her person)

Ah thank you. And of course, I'll need the boy's measurements for his band uniform.

MRS. PAROO

His uniform!

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(WINTHROP falls off the porch in excitement. HAROLD and MRS. PAROO are somewhat surprised)

HAROLD

Hello, son.

(WINTHROP picks himself up and starts to run. HAROLD stops him)
Certainly his uniform. And there won't be a penny due till delivery, which gives him four weeks to enjoy, to anticipate, to imagine, at no cost whatever. Never allow the demands of tomorrow to interfere with the pleasures and excitement of today.

WINTHROP

(Drawing an imaginary line down the outside of his leg)
Would it have ... a ... a ... ?

HAROLD

A stripe? Certainly, my boy, a wide red stripe on each side. What do you think of that?

(WINTHROP drops his eyes suddenly and runs off)

MRS. PAROO

You'll have to excuse Winthrop, Professor. We can't get him to say three words a day even to us. And if you get him to play in the band you'll have St. Michael's own way with you. But if anybody can do it I'll bet you can. Out of a crowd I'll pick you for hod-carrying, clay-pipe smokin' shamrock-wearin', harp-playin' Mavorneen-pinchin' Tara's hall minstrel-singin' Irishman! Be-gob and be-jabbers! Where are ye from, me bye?

HAROLD

Gary, Indiana.

MRS. PAROO

I knew it! Gar -- . Where did you say?

HAROLD

Gary, Indiana. In fact Gary Conservatory was my Alma Mater.

MRS. PAROO

Was she now?

HAROLD

(Aware of MARIAN's approach)
Why yes -- Gold Medal Class of '05. Hodado, Miss Paroo.

MARIAN

Hodado, Mr. Hill.