

First Reading

I - 1 - 10

(ABEL exits. HARRY sneaks up behind MARGY and covers her eyes.)

HARRY
Guess who.

MARGY
Hi, Harry.

HARRY
(Enticingly)
I saw something this morning.

MARGY
What?

HARRY
Sweetest bit of farmland this side of Davenport. I was thinkin' of puttin' in a bid. That is, if you like it.

MARGY
Has it got a house on it?

HARRY
Yeah, but it's too old. We'll have to level it and build a new one.

MARGY
Why? I like old houses.

HARRY
Won't go with our modern kind of farm. Scientific irrigation, electric milking machines and get this - individual hen roosts, separate and sanitary, like... like a chicken maternity ward! Nope, no old clapboard and shingle type house for us. There's a new kinda plastic, pre-fabricated job.

MARGY
Is it pretty?

HARRY
Sure! Wait'll ya see the catalogue - they even tell ya how to furnish it. No carpets or rugs - they're just dust collectors.

MARGY
What's on the floors?

HARRY
(Importantly)
Linoleum.

MARGY

Throughout the whole house?

HARRY

It's slick and smooth and easy to keep clean – like... like every room in the house was a bathroom.

MARGY

Sounds real cozy.

HARRY

Sure! Only way to live – everything sanitary.

(MELISSA enters upstage with a wash basin, crosses into the kitchen and exits through the archway.)

Sure wish I was goin' to the fair with ya, only I can't neglect Daisy just when she's about to calve.

MARGY

I understand, Harry. I know the farm comes first.

HARRY

Ya know, I've been thinkin' – after our wedding...

MARGY

(Crossing away.)

Now Harry...

HARRY

I know, I know – it's not for sure yet. But I've been thinkin' – maybe we'd take a trip somewhere.

MARGY

You mean a honeymoon.

HARRY

(Moving to her.)

That's what! And somewhere nice, too, like maybe Chicago. See the Museum of Science and Industry, take the el to the stockyards.

(She doesn't react.)

'Course one night you'd probably get all slickered up and we'd paint the town – maybe go dancing.

MARGY

Sounds like a wonderful trip, Harry.

HARRY

Then can I take that as a yes?

(WAYNE and GUS enter upstage carrying guide paddles, interrupting the romantic mood HARRY is trying to set. They call out, "Hey, Harry," as they cross and exit.)

C'mon, Margy, whaddaya say? You know I haven't made a plan since I was twelve that didn't include you.

MARGY

I... I can't say anything right now, Harry.

HARRY

After the fair, then?

MARGY

Maybe.

HARRY

(Breaking away from her.)

"Maybe." It's always "maybe" with you. How long ya gonna keep me waitin', Marge? After all, we've graduated high school now - it's time to get on with our lives.

MARGY

(Taking a deep breath.)

Okay, Harry. I'll give you an answer after the fair.

HARRY

You mean it, Margy?

MARGY

Promise.

HARRY

Oh, that's swell!

(He moves to kiss her but is distracted by a roaring squeal from offstage.)

Music 3A: BLUE BOY ENTERS

Wow!

(HARRY races upstage as ABEL enters and swings open the door at the back of Blue Boy's trailer. The door opens downstage, blocking our view as GUS and WAYNE usher Blue Boy into the trailer. A cloud of dust rises from behind a row of foliage to a symphony of squeals and grunts; the trailer begins rocking violently; GUS closes the door at the back of the trailer; music out.)

He's gotta be the biggest boar in the whole world!

ABEL

(For MARGY'S benefit.)

That depends on how ya spell it.

(MELISSA enters in the kitchen with a box, into which she stacks pots and pans.)

Time to hit the road, family. Everybody shake a leg.

(STRALENKO exits through a curtain upstage on the platform followed by JEANNE and SEVERAL MEN; VIVIAN calls to PAT.)

VIVIAN

Hey, Pat! I haven't seen you since V-J Day in Indianapolis! What say we knock back a few after the late show tonight?

PAT

You're on, Valerie.

VIVIAN

It's Vivian.

PAT

Oh, right.

VIVIAN

Same old Pat.

(She exits through the curtain.)

CHARLIE

You must know every dame on the grounds.

PAT

Only the refined types.

CHARLIE

I wish I had your knack with women, but I ain't got the gift o' gab. I never know what to say.

PAT

That's easy. Just talk about them.

(MARGY enters.)

For instance -

(He sidles up next to MARGY.)

Say, did you know your hair bounces up and down when you walk?

MARGY

(Apprehensively)

Everybody's hair bounces when they walk.

PAT

(Tipping his hat.)

Mine doesn't.

MARGY

I mean girls.

PAT

On second thought, it's not your hair. It's the way you hold your shoulders.
(MARGY turns and crosses away; PAT hurries and steps in front of her.)

MARGY

(Nervously)

Do you always annoy women you don't know?

PAT

Only the beautiful ones, Bobbylocks.

MARGY

Bobbylocks...?

(Getting his reference to her bouncy hair.)

I think you have me confused with another type of girl.

PAT

(Again blocking her path.)

Well now, maybe I do. I had you pegged for the adventurous, sophisticated type, a girl who might be willing to take a chance on a lemonade. You're not afraid of lemonade, are you?

MARGY

No. And I'm not afraid of you either.

PAT

Well that's lucky for you, because you know what they say - "Come the autumn, the robin takes wing. So behold and enjoy the robin in spring."

(Flustered, MARGY looks at him for a long moment.)

MARGY

Well... thank you for the advice, Mr. Audobon.

PAT

(Taking her hand and shaking it.)

The name's Pat - Pat Gilbert.

MARGY

It's been nice knowing you, Mr. Gilbert.

(She turns to leave but PAT doesn't let go of her hand.)

PAT

And you are...?

MARGY

(Forcefully pulling her hand from his.)

Leaving.

(She exits.)

HARRY

You bet! If he wants to get tough, so can we!

(WAYNE and HARRY stalk off into the Livestock Pavilion.)

ABEL

(Following them offstage.)

Now you know how sensitive Blue Boy is! You harm one bristle on that boar's butt and I'll...

MARGY

Oh, Mama, this is terrible. What if Blue Boy loses?

MELISSA

We'll have to shoot him.

MARGY

Blue Boy?

MELISSA

No, your father.

(She races off into the pavilion and MARGY follows. PAT, who has been sitting unnoticed to one side reading the paper, calls to MARGY.)

PAT

Whoa there, Bobbylocks - where's the fire?

MARGY

Oh, Pat, it's just terrible. This is Daddy's big event and Blue Boy's being temperamental. Wayne and Harry are back there with him right now. Harry's great with animals.

PAT

How is he with you?

MARGY

What...?

PAT

Are you in love with him?

MARGY

I... I guess I've known Harry forever. We went to kindergarten together and graduated high school together. People have always kinda paired us off. Harry and Margy, Margy and...

(She pauses.)

He wants to marry me.

PAT

What do you want?

MARGY

That's a funny question. I don't think anyone's ever asked me before.

PAT

Now that ya mention it, I don't think I've ever asked a girl that question.

MARGY

I guess you've had a lot of experience with girls.

PAT

I've done my share of running around, if that's what ya mean.

MARGY

But you've never been in love?

PAT

Oh sure - a hundred times.

(Beat)

No, I haven't. Look, Bobbylocks, it's the last day of the fair so I'm gonna level with ya. I'm not the kinda guy I'd wish on a wonderful girl like you.

MARGY

So you're calling it quits.

PAT

No - I don't ever wanna call it quits with you!

(He moves to kiss her just as ABEL enters from the pavilion; PAT discretely crosses away.)

ABEL

How could he do this to me, after all we've meant to each other, after all we've been through together? Why would he deliberately wanna break my heart?

MARGY

I know how much winning the sweepstakes meant to you, Daddy.

ABEL

And I'd sooner plow the back forty with my face than lose that five dollar bet to Dave Miller!

(HANK enters from the pavilion.)

HANK

Hiya, Abel.

ABEL

Well, if it isn't Hank Munson.

MY HEART WILL SING NO LOVE SONG
TILL I KNOW THE WORDS ARE TRUE.

“THE NEXT TIME IT HAPPENS” –
WHAT A FOOLISH THING TO SAY!
WHO EXPECTS A MIRACLE
TO HAPPEN EV’RY DAY?
IT ISN’T IN THE CARDS
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
THAT A THING SO BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFUL
COULD HAPPEN MORE THAN ONCE...
COULD HAPPEN MORE THAN ONCE...
COULD HAPPEN MORE THAN ONCE TO ME!

(MARGY crosses to exit.)

HARRY (OFFSTAGE)

Margy...

(MARGY turns expectantly as HARRY enters.)

MARGY

Oh, Harry... it’s you.

HARRY

Where’ve ya been, Marge?

MARGY

Watching ’em take down the fair. It’s so magical when ya first see it – all lit up and in motion. Then it all comes apart and it’s nothing like ya thought it was.

HARRY

Nope, it’s all just canvas and plywood.

MARGY

Harry, I promised you an answer after the fair.

Music 23A: UNDERSCORE – GOOD-BYE, HARRY

I know how much you care about me, and I care about you, too – I really do. But I can’t marry you. I’m sorry, Harry, sorrier than you can imagine. You’re a terrific guy...

HARRY

If I’m so terrific then why won’t you marry me? Just tell me what ya want – tell me what to do and I’ll do it.

MARGY

There’s nothing you can do.

HARRY

What have I done wrong?

MARGY
You haven't done anything wrong.

HARRY
Then is there somebody else?

MARGY
No.

HARRY
Then marry me!

MARGY
I can't! Don't ya see, Harry? I'm not in love with you.
(HARRY let's this sink in for a moment.)

HARRY
I guess somehow I always knew that, but I thought if I stuck around long enough, maybe you'd grow to love me. I guess I'm the kinda guy who needs to be hit in the head with a frying pan before he gets the message, but I've got it now – loud and clear. And here's some news for you, Miss Margy Frake. There'll come a day when you'll be good and sorry ya let me get away. I woulda given you everything.
(He exits, leaving MARGY visibly moved; music out.)

MARGY
(To herself.)
Good-bye, Harry.

Music 23B: SCENE CHANGE INTO II-7

(MARGY exits slowly as the scene shifts to reveal:)

Scene 7: The Frake Farm –Saturday night after supper

(ABEL is on the porch reading the newspaper. He turns the page and something catches his eye; music out.)

ABEL
Well, I'll be breaded and deep fried!
(Shouting)
Mother, get out here – we're famous!

MELISSA
(Entering in the kitchen carrying supper dishes.)
Why does he do this to me? He knows I can't hear him from the dining room.
(She puts the dishes on the counter and crosses out the screen door.)
What on earth are you hollerin' about out here?