

CHARLIE

(entering, he sees the 'PIANO LESSONS GIVEN' sign on porch)

You the piano teacher in town?

MARIAN

Why, yes.

CHARLIE

Then you must know about this fellow Hill formin' a boys' band here.

MARIAN

Yes...

CHARLIE

Well, don't let it worry you no more. I got the goods on him in spades. Swindlin' two-bit thimble rigger. I'm just passin' through. Number eight only makes a fifteen minute water stop.

MARIAN

Who are you?

CHARLIE

Name's Charlie Cowell – anvil salesman.

(CHARLIE drops the suitcase and we hear a huge anvil shifting inside.)

(CHARLIE)

But just now I'm out to protect the good name of the travelin' fraternity from this swindler.

MARIAN

Mr. Cowell, you're making a big mistake.

CHARLIE

Mistake my old lady's corset-cover! That fella's been the raspberry seed in my wisdom tooth just long enough. He spoiled Illinois for me and he's not gonna spoil Iowa! Say, what kind of music teacher are you, you didn't see through him? He's no more Professor—

MARIAN

I know all about that. Band leaders are always called Professor. It's a harmless deception. He's a fine director and his scholastic—

CHARLIE

Now wait a minute. Fine director? Have you heard one note a'music from any band?

MARIAN

No, but—

CHARLIE

But nuthin', girly-girl! He never formed a band in his life! And he never will!

(A train whistle is heard.)

MARIAN

You'll never make that train at the depot. You'll have to catch it at the crossing.

CHARLIE

No sir. I've got to leave word. And I can see you ain't the one to leave it with.

MARIAN

I never met a man who sells anvils. That's something – well – quite different.

(The train whistle is heard.)

CHARLIE

Takes a real salesman, I can tell you that. Anvils have a limited appeal you know. What am I doin'? I miss that train I'll get fired! And I got to leave word about that fellow Hill!

MARIAN

Leave word with me.

CHARLIE

Not on your tintype! How do I know you'd deliver these letters?

MARIAN

(grabbing his lapels)

Try me.

(MARIAN plants her lips on his. It is a long kiss. The train whistle and bell grows louder... MARIAN struggles free, wipes her mouth in disgust, points left.)

There's your train! Now run for it!

CHARLIE

Why you double-dealing little – who do you think you're protecting? That guy's got a girl in every county in Illinois – and that's 102 counties – not counting the piano teachers like you he cozies up to, to keep their mouths shut!

(as he runs off)

Neither one of you's heard the last of me, girly-girl!

(MARIAN stands, stunned.)

MRS. PAROO

(from offstage)

Marian... Marian!

(MRS. PAROO comes out on the porch.)

Marian dear! Who was you talkin' to just—

(HAROLD enters.)

Why Professor Hill!

HAROLD

Mrs. Paroo! The top a'the evening! Miss Marian.