

WINTHROP

(HE grabs his worms and runs off
into house, reappears)

I'll be back in a minute. I have to show Amaryllith my
live frog.

(HE sings loudly as HE exits)

La de da de da de da de da. La de da. La de da.

(MRS. PAROO starts into the house)

MARIAN

Leave the dishes -- I'll do them, Mama.

MRS. PAROO

Don't you have to change for the sociable?

MARIAN

There's time later.

(CHARLIE COWELL enters Left, passes
porch, turns back)

CHARLIE

Shinns live around here somewhere?

MARIAN

The Shinn home is on East Elm. This is West Elm.

CHARLIE

Aw Criminee!

(HE sees "PIANO GIVEN" sign on
porch)

I see you're the piano teacher in town? 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. That's
why I got to see Shinn.

(Pulls out watch)

I'm just passin' through. Number eight only makes a fifteen
minute water stop. Wish it was 20. Would sure like to
concentrate five minutes on you, girly girl.

MARIAN

Who are you?

(SHE rises)

CHARLIE

Name's Charlie Cowell -- anvil salesman. 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 nothin', girly-girl! He never formed a band in his life! And he never will!

(HE waves papers)

MARIAN

If you'll just listen to me for a minute --

CHARLIE

I'd like to -- I'd like to do more than that, if had the time. I sure got the inclination. But I got to get back on that train and I got to leave this dynamite

(Brandishing papers)

with somebody on the way't the deppo. 'By, girly-girl. See you next time through.

(Train whistle is heard)

MARIAN

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

(SHE gestures Left)

CHARLIE

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

MARIAN

Just a minute -- Mr. Cowell -- you -- don't know me yet.

CHARLIE

(Turning back)

Is that an invitation?

MARIAN

(Losing her nerve)

No -- I meant I don't know you, and --

CHARLIE

(Turning away again)

Yes -- I'd need more time anyway --

MARIAN

I mean as well as I'd like to --

CHARLIE

(Turning back)

No trouble there, girly-girl.

(HE moves in)

MARIAN

(Drawing back)

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

CHARLIE

(Pawing a little)

Takes a real salesman, I can tell you that. Anvils have a limited appeal you know.

(Train whistle)

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

Try me.

(Grabbing his lapels, SHE plants her lips on his. It is a long kiss. The train whistle and bell grows louder ...)

We hear offstage the QUARTET singing "LIDA ROSE".

SHE struggles free, wipes her mouth in disgust, points Left)

There's your train! Now run for it!

2-3-18

CHARLIE

(Furious)

Why you double-dealing little -- Who do you think you're protecting? That guy's got a girl in every county in Illinois, and he's taken it away from every one of 'em! 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. QUARTET enters singing and stop long enough for)

QUARTET

Good evening, Miss Marian. Mm --

(MARIAN still stands dazed, not even acknowledging their presence. THEY exit singing. MRS. PAROO is heard offstage)

MRS. PAROO

(Off)

Marian ... Marian!

(SHE 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.

MRS. PAROO

You and Marian come up and set. I -- I've -- I've got some jelly on the stove.

MARIAN

There's no jelly on the stove, Mama.

MRS. PAROO

(Tartly -- exiting)

Well, I'll put some on.

(MARIAN stands mute)

HAROLD

(After a pause)

Shall we "set" as your mother said?

MARIAN

Well, I ...