

AUDITION PIECE 3 - CHARLIE COWELL & MARIAN

CHARLIE COWELL

Shinns live around here somewhere?

MARIAN

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

CHARLIE COWELL

Aw Criminee!

(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 COWELL

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?

(Rises)

CHARLIE COWELL

Name's Charlie Cowell – anvil salesman. But just now I'm out to protect the good name of the travellin' fraternity from this swindler.

MARIAN

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

CHARLIE COWELL

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

CHARLIE COWELL

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

MARIAN

No, but –

CHARLIE COWELL

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

(Waves papers)

MARIAN

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

CHARLIE COWELL

I'd like to – I'd like to do more than that, if I 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.

'Bye, 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.

(Gestures LEFT)

CHARLIE COWELL

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 COWELL

(Turning back)

Is that an invitation?

MARIAN

(Losing her nerve)

No – I meant I don't know you, and –

CHARLIE COWELL

(Turning away again)

Yes – I'd need more time anyway –

MARIAN

I mean as well as I'd like to –

CHARLIE COWELL

(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 COWELL

(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 COWELL

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

MARIAN

Try me.