

CHARLIE COWELL

All right, if you're all through I'll tell you about Harold Hill!

SALESMAN #5

You really know Harold Hill?

CHARLIE COWELL

Never saw him in my life but I know this much — he's giving every one of us a black eye! After he's worked a town over, the next salesman to arrive gets automatically tarred and feathered and rode out to the city limits on a rail.

(THEY laugh)

You think that's funny. Well, wait till it happens to you!
Your hair never grows back.

(COWELL pulls off hat.)

THEY react)

SALESMAN #1

But why should he get rode out'a town on a rail?

CHARLIE COWELL

Because in order to sell band instruments, and uniforms, and instruction books, he has to guarantee to teach the kids to play.

SALESMAN #3

Well?

CHARLIE COWELL

And to form them kids into a band! With himself as the leader!

SALESMAN #5

What's wrong with that?

CHARLIE COWELL

He don't know one note from another that's what's wrong with that! And he can't tell a bass drum from a pipe organ! I'll catch up with that swindlin' two-bit thimble rigger, and when I do I'll squeal on him so loud —

SALESMAN #5

(Laughing)

Wow, you're mad, Charlie!
Sure like to be around when you catch up with that fella.

CHARLIE COWELL

Well it won't be on this trip. Not in Iowa. Even the great Professor Harold Hill wouldn't try to sell them neck-bowed Hawkeyes out here.

CONDUCTOR

(OFFSTAGE)

Booaart!

(The STRANGER makes a fast decision and grabs his suitcase)

STRANGER

Gentlemen, you intrigue me. I think I'll have to give Iowa a try.

CHARLIE COWELL

(Coldly)

Don't believe I caught your name.

4 — Iowa Stubborn

(Townspeople, Farmer, Farmer's Wife)

(STRANGER turns and we see him for the first time. It is our hero. HE flashes suitcase which bears the legend "PROF. HAROLD HILL" and he EXITS from train as all heads go out the windows.

Coach splits in two to reveal a full stage view of River City's Main Street immediately following. The town is in 4th of July bunting and the stubborn Iowans are out in force)

END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

(TIME: Immediately following.

AT RISE: River City, Iowa, center of town, exterior.

TOWNSPEOPLE are seen en tableau.

MAYOR SHINN ENTERS from the Billiard Parlor, leaving the door open for 2 WORKMEN who ENTER carrying a large crate containing a visible pool table which they take into the Billiard Parlor)

TOWNSPEOPLE

OH, THERE'S NOTHIN' HALFWAY
ABOUT THE IOWA WAY TO TREAT YOU,
WHEN WE TREAT YOU,
WHICH WE MAY NOT DO AT ALL.

EWART DUNLOP

How can it be raining? Didn't the Gazette predict fair?

(Rolling THUNDER is heard)

JACEY SQUIRES

Sure did, Ewart, that's why we all prepared for a storm.

OLIN BRITT

The Gazette is acc'r't most a'the time and you know it, Jacey.

OLIVER HIX

You wouldn't last very long in the bankin' business bein' accur't most a'the time.

(A verbal free-for-all is under way)

SHINN

Now just a minute — let's have order here! Order! Order!

(The quarrel subsides. The MEN sit. The TRAIN WHISTLE is heard. All the MEN take out their watches)

OLIVER

Hmm. Number eight's late again tonight.

JACEY

I make her early.

EWART

She's late alright.

OLIN

She's right on time, 'smatter'th your watch?

(THEY'RE off again. SHINN struggles for order)

SHINN

Will you members of the School Board stop bicker'n in public?

OLIN

All in the world that I said was —

SHINN

(Hastily)

Never mind! Four score —