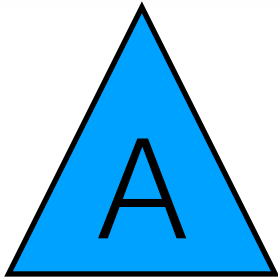


ACT ONE

PROLOGUE: Rooftop, Dawn



#1 – Overture

(Summer, 1899. A figure sleeps peacefully on a rooftop amid the moonlit Manhattan cityscape. It is JACK, a charismatic boy of seventeen. Across the rooftop, another figure stirs. CRUTCHIE, a slight and sickly boy of fifteen, walks with the aid of a wooden crutch. He crosses to the fire escape ladder and fumbles, trying to climb down. JACK stirs.)

#2 – Santa Fe (Prologue)

Jack, Crutchie

2 JACK

Where you going? Morning bell ain't rung yet. Get back to sleep.

3 CRUTCHIE

I wanna beat the other fellas to the street. I don't want anyone should see; I ain't been walkin' so good.

2 JACK

Quit gripin'. You know how many guys fake a limp for sympathy? That bum leg of yours is a gold mine.

3 CRUTCHIE

Someone gets the idea I can't make it on my own, they'll lock me up in The Refuge for good. Be a pal, Jack. Help me down.

(loses his footing and almost falls, yelps)

Whoa!!!

(JACK rushes to CRUTCHIE's rescue, pulling the boy back from danger.)

2 JACK

You wanna bust your other leg, too?

3 CRUTCHIE

No. I wanna go down.

2 JACK

You'll be down there soon enough. Take a moment to drink in my penthouse high above the stinkin' streets of New York.

3 CRUTCHIE

You're crazy.

C10

2 JACK

Because I like a breath of fresh air? 'Cause I like seein' the sky and the stars?

3 CRUTCHIE

You're seein' stars all right!

2 JACK

Them streets down there sucked the life right outta my old man. Years of rotten jobs, stomped on by bosses. And when they finally broke him, they tossed him to the curb like yesterday's paper. Well, they ain't doin' that to me.

3 CRUTCHIE

But everyone wants to come here.

2 JACK

New York's fine for those what can afford a big strong door to lock it out. But I tell you, Crutchie, there's a whole other way out there. So you keep your small life in the big city. Give me a big life in a small town.

THEY SAY FOLKS IS DYIN' TO GET HERE
ME, I'M DYIN' TO GET AWAY
TO A LITTLE TOWN OUT WEST THAT'S SPANKIN' NEW
AND WHILE I AIN'T NEVER BEEN THERE
I CAN SEE IT CLEAR AS DAY
IF YOU WANT, I BET'CHA
YOU COULD SEE IT, TOO

CLOSE YOUR EYES...
COME WITH ME
WHERE IT'S CLEAN AND GREEN AND PRETTY
AND THEY WENT AND MADE A CITY OUTTA CLAY
WHY, THE MINUTE THAT YOU GET THERE
FOLKS'LL WALK RIGHT UP AND SAY
"WELCOME HOME, SON
WELCOME HOME TO SANTA FE!"

(CRUTCHIE is taken under Jack's spell.)

PLANTIN' CROPS,
SPLITTIN' RAILS
SWAPPIN' TALES AROUND THE FIRE
'CEPT FOR SUNDAY, WHEN YOU LIE AROUND ALL DAY
SOON YOUR FRIENDS ARE MORE LIKE FAM'LY
AND THEY'S BEGGING YOU TO STAY!

FX @-20

2 JACK
AIN'T THAT NEAT?
LIVIN'S SWEET
IN SANTA FE

3 CRUTCHIE
You got folks there?

2 JACK
Got no folks nowhere. You?

3 CRUTCHIE
I don't need folks. I got friends.

2 JACK
How's about you come with me? No one worries about no gimp leg in Santa Fe.
You just hop a palomino and ride in style.

3 CRUTCHIE
Feature me: ridin' in style.

2 JACK
I bet a few months of clean air and you could toss that crutch for good.

2 3 JACK, CRUTCHIE
SANTA FE
YOU CAN BET
WE WON'T LET THEM BASTIDS BEAT US
WE WON'T BEG NO ONE TO TREAT US FAIR AND SQUARE
THERE'S A LIFE THAT'S WORTH THE LIVIN'
AND I'M GONNA DO MY SHARE:
2 JACK
WORK THE LAND
CHASE THE SUN
2 3 JACK, CRUTCHIE
SWIM THE WHOLE RIO GRANDE
JUST FOR FUN!

3 CRUTCHIE

(stands on his own)

WATCH ME STAND!
WATCH ME RUN...

(CRUTCHIE realizes his recovery is just a fantasy and turns away from JACK.)

Automix
off

2 JACK

Hey...

(CRUTCHIE looks at him. JACK wraps his arms around his friend protectively.)

DON'T YOU KNOW THAT WE'S A FAM'LY?
WOULD I LET YA DOWN?
NO WAY!
JUST HOLD ON, KID
TILL THAT TRAIN MAKES SANTA FE

(CRUTCHIE leans against JACK as the sun rises behind them. The church bell tolls 5 a.m., which breaks the spell.)

Time for dreamin's done.

(JACK takes Crutchie's crutch and bangs it on the fire escape metal, sounding an alarm.)

Hey! Specs, Racer, Henry, Albert, Elmer. Get a move on, boys. Them papes don't sell themselves!

Q45

SCENE ONE: Newboys' Lodging House & Newsie Square

(RACE, a little tough guy, calls to the others as he dresses.)

6 RACE

Hey, Albert, Elmer, Specs! You heard Jack. Get a move on.

(ALBERT appears next to him, still wiping the sleep from his eyes.)

8 ALBERT

I was havin' the most beautiful dream. My lips is still tingling.

6 RACE

A pretty girl?

8 ALBERT

A leg of lamb!

#3 – Carrying the Banner

Jack, Newsies, Nuns

(More BOYS begin to appear as they dress and wash. ALBERT smokes a cigar.)

6 RACE

Hey!

THAT'S MY CIGAR!

8 ALBERT

YOU'LL STEAL ANOTHER

13 SPECS

(referring to the other BOYS)

HEY, LOOK, IT'S BATH TIME AT THE ZOO

9 ROMEO

I THOUGHT THAT I'D SURPRISE MY MOTHER

14 HENRY

If you can find her.

5 6 NEWSIES
CHORUS UP

Who asked you?

8 ALBERT

Papes ain't movin' like they used to. I need a new sellin' spot. Got any ideas?

6 RACE

FROM BOTTLE ALLEY TO THE HARBOR

THERE'S EASY PICKIN'S GUARANTEED

PIT UP

7 FINCH

TRY ANY BANKER, BUM, OR BARBER
THEY ALMOST ALL KNOWS HOW TO READ

2 JACK

IT'S A CROOKED GAME WE'RE PLAYIN'
ONE WE'LL NEVER LOSE
LONG AS SUCKERS DON'T MIND PAYIN'
JUST TO GET BAD NEWS!

(The NEWSIES move outdoors to Newsie Square.)

5 6 NEWSIES

AIN'T IT A FINE LIFE
CARRYING THE BANNER THROUGH IT ALL!
A MIGHTY FINE LIFE
CARRYING THE BANNER TOUGH AND TALL
WHEN THAT BELL RINGS
WE GOES WHERE WE WISHES
WE'S AS FREE AS FISHES
SURE BEATS WASHIN' DISHES
WHAT A FINE LIFE
CARRYING THE BANNER HOME FREE ALL

CHORUS UP @-5

(KATHERINE, a lovely young lady, walks by with a male friend, DARC Y. ROMEO spots her and starts toward her, but JACK sees her too.)

9 ROMEO

Well, hello, hello, hello, beautiful.

2 JACK

Step back, Romeo. Nothin' what concerns you here.

(moves ROMEO aside and shoots to KATHERINE)

Morning, Miss. Can I interest you in the latest news?

1 KATHERINE

The paper isn't out yet.

2 JACK

I'd be delighted to bring it to you personally.

1 KATHERINE

I've got a headline for you: "Cheeky Boy Gets Nothing for His Troubles!"

(KATHERINE brushes past JACK as DARC Y laughs.)

CHORUS @-30

9 ROMEO

(to JACK)

Back to the bench, slugger. You struck out.

2 JACK

(feigning pain)

I'm crushed.

7 FINCH

Hey, Crutchie. What's your leg say? Gonna rain?

3 CRUTCHIE

(shakes his leg)

No rain. Partly cloudy. Clear by evening.

7 FINCH

They oughta bottle this guy.

6 RACE

And the limp sells fifty papes a week all by itself.

3 CRUTCHIE

I don't need the limp to sell papes. I got personality.

IT TAKES A SMILE THAT SPREADS LIKE BUTTER
THE KIND WHAT TURNS A LADY'S HEAD

6 RACE

IT TAKES AN ORPHAN WITH A STUTTER

7 FINCH

WHO'S ALSO BLIND

8 ALBERT

AND MUTE

15 ELMER

AND DEAD!

2 3 JACK, CRUTCHIE

SUMMER STINKS AND WINTER'S FREEZIN'
WHEN YOU WORKS OUTDOORS

2 3 10 11 16

JACK, CRUTCHIE, BUTTONS, SPLASHER, TOMMY BOY

START OUT SWEATIN', END UP SNEEZIN'

NEWSIES CHORUS & MUSH

5 6

IN BETWEEN IT POURS!

CHORUS
UP

Automix
off

5 6 (NEWSIES)

STILL, IT'S A FINE LIFE (STILL, IT'S A FINE LIFE)

CARRYING THE BANNER (CARRYING THE BANNER)

WITH ME CHUMS (WITH ME CHUMS)

A BUNCH O' BIG SHOTS (A BUNCH O' BIG SHOTS)

TOSSIN' OUT A FREEBIE TO THE BUMS (TOSSIN' OUT A FREEBIE...)

7 FINCH

(calling to the NEWSIES)

HEY! WHAT'S THE HOLD UP?

WAITIN' MAKES ME ANTSY

I LIKES LIVIN' CHANCEY

5 6 NEWSIES

HARLEM TO DELANCEY

WHAT A FINE LIFE

CARRYING THE BANNER THROUGH THE...

(A trio of NUNS appears and distributes a breakfast of coffee and doughnuts to the NEWSIES.)

1 NUNS

BLESSED CHILDREN

THOUGH YOU WANDER

LOST AND DEPRAVED

JESUS LOVES YOU

YOU SHALL BE SAVED

15 ELMER

Thanks for the grub, Sistuh.

1 NUN 1

Elmer, when are we going to see you inside the church?

15 ELMER

I don't know, Sistuh. But it's bound to rain sooner or later.

9 ROMEO

CURDLED COFFEE

CONCRETE DOUGHNUTS

SPRINKLED WITH MOLD

1 NUNS

BLESSED CHILDREN

AH

JESUS LOVES YOU

AH

6 9

RACE &
ROMEO

HOMEMADE BISCUITS,
JUST TWO YEARS OLD

6 RACE &
9 ROMEO

(simultaneously with RACE and NUNS:)

1

15 ELMER

JUST GIMME HALF A CUP

14 HENRY

SOMETHING TO WAKE ME UP

16 TOMMY BOY

I GOTTA FIND AN ANGLE

3 ALYSSA H.

IT'S GETTIN' BAD OUT THERE

10 MUSH

PAPERS IS ALL I GOT

13 SPECS

IT'S EIGHTY-EIGHT DEGREES

12 JO JO

JACK SAYS TO CHANGE MY SPOT

8 ALBERT

WISH I COULD CATCH A BREEZE

7 FINCH

MAYBE IT'S WORTH A SHOT

11 BUTTONS

ALL I CAN CATCH IS FLEAS

2 JACK

IF I HATE THE HEADLINE

I'LL MAKE UP A HEADLINE

2 3 JACK, CRUTCHIE

AND I'LL SAY ANYTHING I HAVE'TA

2 3 6 9 10 JACK, CRUTCHIE, RACE, ROMEO, MUSH

'CAUSE AT TWO FOR A PENNY

IF I TAKE TOO MANY

WEASEL JUST MAKES ME EAT 'EM AFTA'

Automix
off

(The NEWSIES continue their journey through downtown Manhattan.)

5 NEWSIES GROUP 1

GOT A FEELIN' 'BOUT THE
HEADLINE!

6 NEWSIES GROUP 2

I DO, TOO!

C98

5 (NEWSIES GROUP 1)

I SMELLS ME A HEADLINE!
PAPES ARE GONNA SELL LIKE WE
WAS GIVIN' 'EM AWAY!
BET'CHA DINNER IT'S A DOOZY
'BOUT A PISTOL-PACKIN' FLOOZY
WHO KNOWS HOW TO MAKE A
NEWSIE'S DAY!

6 (NEWSIES GROUP 2)

SO IT MUST BE TRUE!

WHAT A SWITCH!
SOON WE'LL ALL BE RICH!
DON'T KNOW A BETTER WAY
TO MAKE A
NEWSIE'S DAY!

5 6 NEWSIES

YOU WANNA MOVE THE NEXT EDITION?
GIVE US A EARTHQUAKE OR A WAR

15 ELMER

HOW 'BOUT A CROOKED POLITICIAN?

5 6 NEWSIES

YA NITWIT, THAT AIN'T NEWS NO MORE!
UPTOWN TO GRAND CENTRAL STATION
DOWN TO CITY HALL
WE IMPROVES OUR CIRCULATION
WALKIN' TILL WE FALL!

CHORUS DOWN
FOR ELMER

5 NEWSIES GROUP 1

BUT WE'LL BE OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER
MAN TO MAN

WE'RE ALWAYS OUT THERE
SOAKIN' EV'RY SUCKER
THAT WE CAN

HERE'S THE HEADLINE:
"NEWSIES ON A MISSION!"
KILL THE COMPETITION!
SELL THE NEXT EDITION!
WE'LL BE OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER!
SEE US OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER!
ALWAYS OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER!

6 NEWSIES GROUP 2

GOT A FEELIN' 'BOUT THE HEADLINE!
I SMELLS ME A HEADLINE!
PAPES ARE GONNA SELL LIKE
WE WAS GIVIN' 'EM AWAY!
BET'CHA DINNER IT'S A DOOZY
'BOUT A PISTOL-PACKIN' FLOOZY
DON'T KNOW ANY BETTER WAY
TO MAKE A NEWSIE'S DAY!
I WAS STAKIN' OUT THE CIRCUS
AND THEN SOMEONE SAID THAT CONEY'S
REALLY HOT, BUT WHEN I GOT THERE
THERE WAS SPOT WITH ALL HIS CRONIES
HECK, I'M GONNA TAKE WHAT LITTLE
DOUGH I GOT AND PLAY THE PONIES!
WE AT LEAST DESERVES A HEADLINE
FOR THE HOURS THAT THEY WORK US
JEEZ, I BET IF I JUST STAYED
A LITTLE LONGER AT THE CIRCUS...

CHORUS
OUT

(The NEWSIES have arrived at the locked gate in front of the World – a prominent newspaper owned by Joseph Pulitzer.)

7 FINCH

Hey, look! They're puttin' up the headline.

13 SPECS

I hope it's really bloody. With a nice clear picture.

(A large chalkboard looms above. The NEWSIES watch in anticipation as a MAN writes the headline in large letters, "TROLLEY STRIKE ENTERS THIRD WEEK.")

15 ELMER

The trolley strike? Not again!

6 RACE

Three weeks of the same story.

7 FINCH

They're killin' us with that snoozer.

(Two tough-looking boys, OSCAR and MORRIS DELANCEY, unlock the gates.)

3 MORRIS

Make way. Step aside.

6 RACE

Dear me, what is that unpleasant aroma? I fear the sewer may have backed up during the night.

3 CRUTCHIE

Or could it be...

5 6 NEWSIES

... the Delancey brothers.

7 FINCH

Hey, Oscar, word on the street says you and your brother took money to beat up striking trolley workers.

2 OSCAR

So? It's honest work.

8 ALBERT

But crackin' the heads of defenseless workers?

2 OSCAR

I take care of the guy who takes care of me.

6 RACE

Ain't your father one of the strikers?

2 OSCAR

Guess he didn't take care of me!

(As if to make his point, MORRIS grabs CRUTCHIE and throws him to the ground.)

3 MORRIS

You want some of that too? Ya lousy crip!

(JACK pulls CRUTCHIE back to his feet and then confronts the DELANCEYS. The NEWSIES back up to give JACK room.)

2 JACK

Now that's not nice, Morris.

6 RACE

Five to one Jack skunks 'em!

2 JACK

One unfortunate day you might find you got a bum gam of your own. How'd you like us pickin' on you? Maybe we should find out.

(And with that, JACK takes Crutchie's walking stick and smacks the DELANCEYS in the shins, knocking them both to the ground.)

2 OSCAR

Wait till I get my hands on you.

2 JACK

Ya gotta catch me first.

(A chase ensues as the NEWSIES sing and dance their way in through the gate.)

5 6 NEWSIES

WE'LL ALL BE OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER MAN TO MAN
WE'RE ALWAYS OUT THERE
SOAKIN' EV'RY SUCKER THAT WE CAN
HERE'S THE HEADLINE:
"NEWSIES ON A MISSION!"
KILL THE COMPETITION!
SELL THE NEXT EDITION!
WE'LL BE OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER!
SEE US OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER!
ALWAYS OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER!

CHORUS
UP