

SCENE ONE: NEWSBOYS' LODGING HOUSE AND NEWSIE SQUARE

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

RACE

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

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

ALBERT

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

RACE

A pretty girl?

ALBERT

A leg of lamb!

(#3) CARRYING THE BANNER

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

RACE

Hey!

THAT'S MY CIGAR!

ALBERT

YOU'LL STEAL ANOTHER.

SPECS

(referring to the other BOYS)

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

HENRY

I THOUGHT THAT I'D SURPRISE MY MOTHER.

ALBERT

If you can find her.

NEWSIES

Who asked you?

ALBERT

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

RACE

FROM BOTTLE ALLEY TO THE HARBOR,
THERE'S EASY PICKIN'S GUARANTEED.

FINCH

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

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.)

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.

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

ROMEO

Well, hello, hello, hello, beautiful.

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?

KATHERINE

The paper isn't out yet.

JACK

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

KATHERINE

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

(KATHERINE brushes past JACK as DARCY laughs.)

ROMEO

(to JACK)

Back to the bench, slugger. You struck out.

JACK

(feigning pain)

I'm crushed.

FINCH

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

CRUTCHIE

(shakes his leg)

No rain. Partly cloudy. Clear by evening.

FINCH

They ought'a bottle this guy.

RACE

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

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.

RACE

IT TAKES AN ORPHAN WITH A STUTTER,

FINCH

WHO'S ALSO BLIND-

ALBERT

AND MUTE-

ELMER

AND DEAD!

JACK, CRUTCHIE, BUTTONS, JO JO
SUMMER STINKS AND WINTER'S FREEZIN'
WHEN YOU WORKS OUTDOORS.

JACK, TOMMY BOY, CRUTCHIE, BUTTONS, JO JO
 START OUT SWEATIN', END UP SNEEZIN',

NEWSIES

IN BETWEEN IT POURS!

NEWSIE GROUP 1

STILL IT'S A FINE LIFE
 CARRYING THE BANNER
 WITH ME CHUMS.
 A BUNCH OF BIG SHOTS,
 TOSSIN' OUT A FREEBIE TO THE BUMS.

NEWSIE GROUP 2 (ECHO)

STILL IT'S A FINE LIFE
 CARRYING THE BANNER
 WITH ME CHUMS.
 A BUNCH OF BIG SHOTS,
 TOSSIN' OUT A FREEBIE...

FINCH

(calling to the NEWSIES)

HEY! WHAT'S THE HOLD UP?
 WAITIN' MAKES ME ANTSY.
 I LIKES LIVIN' CHANCEY,

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.)

NUNS

BLESSED CHILDREN,
 THOUGH YOU WANDER
 LOST AND DEPRAVED,
 JESUS LOVES YOU.
 YOU SHALL BE SAVED.

ELMER

Thanks for the grub, Sistuh.

NUN 1

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

ELMER

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

RACE

CURDLED COFFEE,
 CONCRETE DOUGHNUTS
 SPRINKLED WITH MOLD,
 HOMEMADE BISCUITS,
 JUST TWO YEARS OLD.

NUNS

BLESSED CHILDREN,
 AH
 JESUS LOVES YOU,
 AH

(simultaneously with above:)

ELMER
JUST GIMME HALF A CUP.

HENRY
SOMETHING TO WAKE ME UP.

ROMEO
I GOTTA FIND AN ANGLE.

TOMMY BOY
IT'S GETTIN' BAD OUT THERE.

MUSH
PAPERS IS ALL I GOT

SPECS
IT'S EIGHTY-EIGHT DEGREES.

JO JO
JACK SAYS TO CHANGE MY SPOT.

SNIPER
WISH I COULD CATCH A BREEZE

FINCH
MAYBE IT'S WORTH A SHOT.

BUTTONS
ALL I CAN CATCH IS FLEAS.

JACK
IF I HATE THE HEADLINE
I'LL MAKE UP A HEADLINE

JACK, CRUTCHIE
AND I'LL SAY ANYTHING I HAVE'TA.
'CAUSE AT TWO FOR A PENNY,

JACK, CRUTCHIE, RACE, ROMEO
IF I TAKE TOO MANY
WEASEL JUST MAKES ME EAT 'EM AFTA.

(The NEWSIES continue their journey through downtown Manhattan.)

NEWSIE GROUP 1
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
WHO KNOWS HOW TO MAKE A
NEWSIE'S DAY!

NEWSIE GROUP 2
I DO, TOO!
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!

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

ELMER
HOW 'BOUT A CROOKED POLITICIAN?

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!

NEWSIE 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!

NEWSIE 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...

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

FINCH

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

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.")*

ELMER

The Trolley Strike? Not again!

RACE

Three weeks of the same story.