

"NEWSIES!"

JACK SIDE

ACT I - PROLOGUE

EXT. A ROOF-TOP IN LOWER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

SUMMER - 1899

OVERTURE ends and we see a moonlit Manhattan city-scape of buildings, fire escapes, carts and crates and oil drums.

A figure stirs on the roof. It's JACK, a charismatic boy of seventeen who is peacefully tucked in a corner, sketching on a piece of newsprint paper.

Across the roof another figure stirs. It's CRUTCHIE, a slight and sickly boy of fifteen who walks with the aid of a wooden crutch. HE crosses the roof to the fire escape ladder and fumbles trying to climb on.

START →

JACK

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

CRUTCHIE

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

JACK

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

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...

CRUTCHIE loses his footing and almost falls. HE yelps.

CRUTCHIE (cont'd)

Whoa!!!

JACK

You wanna bust your other leg too?

CRUTCHIE

No. I wanna go down.

"NEWSIES!"

JACK SIDE

JACK

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

CRUTCHIE

You're crazy.

JACK

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

CRUTCHIE

You're seein' stars all right!

JACK

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

CRUTCHIE

But everyone wants to come here.

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.

← **STOP**