Orphans

ACT ONE

 # 1 — *Overture* **(Orchestra)**

Scene1

 # 2 — *Maybe* **(Annie)**

(The OVERTURE ends and "Maybe" underscores the following scene. The CURTAIN rises on the New York City Municipal Orphanage — Girls' Annex. At stage right is the front hallway and the dormitory covers the rest of downstage. Upstage, we can see a lamplit New York City street and, across the street, a row of tenements.

Shortly after three a.m. on a chilly morning in early December, 1933.

The stage is nearly dark. Asleep in the dormitory are six ORPHANS — MOLLY, the littlest, who is 6; KATE, the next-to-littlest, who is 7; TESSIE, the cry baby, who is 10; PEPPER, the toughest, who is 12; JULY, the quietest, who is 13; and DUFFY, the biggest, who is also 13)

MOLLY

(Awaking from a dream and crying out)

Mama! Mama! Mommy!

PEPPER

(Sitting up)

Shut up!

DUFFY

Can't anybody get any sleep around here?

MOLLY

Mama. Mommy.

PEPPER

I said, shut your trap, Molly.

(PEPPER shoves MOLLY to the floor, downstage center)

JULY

Ahh, stop shovin' the poor kid. She ain't doin' nuthin' to you.

PEPPER

She's keepin' me awake, ain't she?

JULY

No, you're keeping *us* awake —

PEPPER

I am not!

JULY

You are too!

(PEPPER and JULY fight)

JULY

Ah, ya think you're Jack Dempsey, do ya?

PEPPER

And you're lookin' for a knuckle sandwich.

TESSIE

(Whining)

Oh my goodness, oh my goodness they're fightin' and I won't get no sleep all night. Oh, my goodness, oh my goodness.

(ANNIE, who is 11, runs in with a bucket. SHE has been up cleaning. She breaks up the fight)

ANNIE

Pipe down, all of ya. Go back to sleep.

MOLLY

(Rubbing her eyes…still half asleep)

Mama, mommy.

ANNIE

(To MOLLY)

It's all right, Molly. Annie's here.

MOLLY

It was my Mama, Annie. We was ridin' on the ferry boat. And she was holdin' me up to see all the big ships. And then she was walkin' away, wavin'. And I couldn't find her no more. Any place.

(ANNIE holds a hanky for MOLLY)

ANNIE

Blow.

(Molly blows her nose loudly)

It was only a dream, honey. Now, you gotta go back to sleep. It's after three o'clock.

MOLLY

Annie ... read me your note.

ANNIE

My note? Again?

MOLLY

PLEASE.

ANNIE

Sure, Molly.

PEPPER

Here it comes again. Aargh!

ANNIE

(ANNIE takes a crumpled note from her pocket, unfolds it and reads it to MOLLY)

"Please take good care of our little darling. Her name is Annie.."

DUFFY

(Mockingly; she has heard this note read a thousand times before)

"She was born on October 28th. We will be back to get her soon."

PEPPER

(Mockingly)

"We have left half of a silver locket around her neck and kept the other half …

(KATE and DUFFY Join PEPPER)

PEPPER, DUFFY & KATE

… so that when we come back for her you will know that she's our baby."

(They all laugh)

TESSIE

Oh my goodness, now they're laughing.

ANNIE

(To the OTHERS)

All right. Do you wanna sleep with your teeth inside your mouth or out!

(ANNIE lovingly folds her note and puts it back in her pocket)

MOLLY

Gee, I dream about havin' a mother and father again. But you're lucky. You really got 'em.

ANNIE

I know.

(Fingering her locket)

(ANNIE and MOLLY cuddle together on the floor)

Somewhere. Somewhere.

(Sings)

MAYBE FAR AWAY,
OR MAYBE REAL NEARBY
HE MAY BE POURIN' HER COFFEE
SHE MAY BE STRAIGHT'NIN' HIS TIE!

MAYBE IN A HOUSE
ALL HIDDEN BY A HILL
SHE'S SITTIN' PLAYIN' PIANO,
HE'S SITTIN' PAYIN' A BILL!

BETCHA THEY'RE YOUNG
BETCHA THEY'RE SMART
BET THEY COLLECT THINGS LIKE
ASHTRAYS AND ART!

BETCHA THEY'RE GOOD —
(WHY SHOULDN'T THEY BE?)
THEIR ONE MISTAKE WAS GIVING UP ME!

MISS HAANIGAN / ANNIE / ORPHANS

(ANNIE)

AS LONG AS THEY'RE MINE!
SO, MAYBE NOW THIS PRAYER'S
THE LAST ONE OF ITS KIND...

(At the foot of the bed)

WON'T YOU PLEASE COME GET YOUR "BABY"

(SHE climbs into bed. Tucks herself in. The LIGHTS dim. In the dark, we hear the song end)

ANNIE & ORPHANS

MAYBE.

 # 3 — *Annie's Escape* *(Orchestra)*

(After the song, a far-away church bell chimes four a.m. Annie awakens, startled. She rubs her eyes and looks at her note, and then goes up to the window looking out into the street, then returns to her bed and starts putting some things into a small basket. We dimly see the ORPHANS again waking up and ANNIE turns on a flashlight)

PEPPER

NOW what?

DUFFY

Annie, whatta ya doin'?

ANNIE

Runnin' away.

TESSIE

Oh my goodness.

ANNIE

(ANNIE puts on her sweater)

My folks are never comin' for me. I gotta go find them.

JULY

Annie, you're crazy. Miss Hannigan'll catch you.

KATE

And lock you in the cellar again.

ANNIE

I don't care. I'm gettin' outta here.

(With her basket of belongings under her arm)

Okay. Goin' now. Wish me luck.

ALL EXCEPT PEPPER

Good luck, Annie.

PEPPER

So long, dumbbell. And good luck.

(With the basket under her arm and shining the flashlight in front of her, ANNIE sneaks on tiptoe across the stage, toward the front door. Music underneath. As ANNIE reaches to open the door, MISS HANNIGAN, wearing a bathrobe, flings open her door and, witch-like, stands bathed in white light before ANNIE)

MISS HANNIGAN

Aha! Caught you!

(MISS HANNIGAN flings ANNIE to the floor and switches on the hallway light. The ORPHANS hide under their covers)

I hear ya, brat. I *ALWAYS* hear ya. Get up. I said, get up!

ANNIE

(Getting warily up)

Yes, Miss Hannigan.

MISS HANNIGAN

There! Now, what do you say? *WHAT ... DO ... YOU ... SAY?*

ANNIE

(Tough; through her teeth)

I love you, Miss Hannigan.

MISS HANNIGAN

Rotten orphan.

ANNIE

(Angrily)

I'm *NOT* an orphan. My mother and father left a note saying they loved me and they were coming back for me.

MISS HANNIGAN

That was 1922, this is 1933.

(laughing)

They must've got stuck in traffic.

(MISS HANNIGAN switches on the LIGHT in the dormitory, sticks her head through the door and BLOWS her whistle loudly)

You in here. Get up. Get up!

(Blows whistle at Molly, who is still hidden under the covers.)

Get up!

(Molly gets up)

4 — *Hard Knock Life* *(Annie & Orphans)*

(To ANNIE, motioning to her to put the basket and flashlight back in the dormitory)

Put them things away.

(MISS HANNIGAN takes a pint bottle out of her bathrobe pocket and takes a swig. Molly is standing at her side looking at her. After a beat she notices Molly)

It's medicine!

(SHE finishes the bottle)

MOLLY

(Tugging at MISS HANNIGAN to get her attention when she is done drinking)

You must be very sick!

MISS HANNIGAN

(Waits a beat. Turns and loudly tries to scare Molly)

Boo!

MOLLY

(MOLLY doesn't flinch, then–)

Boo!

MISS HANNIGAN

(MISS HANNIGAN flinches)

Now, for this one's shenanigans, you'll scrub this floor, and strip them beds for the laundry man.

TESSIE

(Whining)

But it's four o'clock in the morning.

MISS HANNIGAN

(Laughs cruelly)

I know. And you'll get down on your knobby little knees and clean this dump until it shines like the top of the Chrysler Building.

ORPHANS & ANNIE

Yes, Miss Hannigan.

MISS HANNIGAN

Get to work. Now!

(ORPHANS runs for pails and return to front of stage. Each bumps into MISS HANNIGAN, saying 'sorry', but not meaning it at all)

Why any kid would want to be an orphan, I'll never know.

(SHE slams the door behind her, and the ORPHANS throw down their scrub brushes)

ORPHANS

IT'S THE HARD-KNOCK LIFE FOR US!
IT'S THE HARD-KNOCK LIFE FOR US!

ANNIE

'STEADA TREATED,

ORPHANS

WE GET TRICKED!

ANNIE

'STEADA KISSES,

ORPHANS

WE GET KICKED!