

(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.

FINCH

They're killin' us with that snoozer.

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

MORRIS

Make way. Step aside.

RACE

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

CRUTCHIE

Or could it be...

NEWSIES

... the Delancey brothers.

FINCH

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

OSCAR

So? It's honest work.

ALBERT

But crackin' the heads of defenseless workers?

OSCAR

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

RACE

Ain't your father one of the strikers?

OSCAR

Guess he didn't take care of me!

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

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.)

JACK

Now that's not nice, Morris.

RACE

Five to one Jack skunks 'em!

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.)

OSCAR

Wait till I get my hands on you.

JACK

Ya gotta catch me first.

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

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!

(NEWSIES)



(The NEWSIES arrive at the distribution windows of the World. WIESEL, an ill-tempered, rumpled man, appears with the DELANCEYS to collect the money and distribute the newspapers to the NEWSIES.)

WIESEL

Papes for the newsies! Line up!

(JACK is the first to the window.)

JACK

Good morning, Weasel. Did you miss me?

WIESEL

The name's Wise-el.

JACK

Ain't that what I said?

(slapping down his money)

I'll take the usual.

WIESEL

A hundred papes for the wise guy.

(OSCAR hands over the papers and RACE moves up to the window.)

RACE

How's it going, Weasel?

WIESEL

At least call me "mister."

RACE

I'll call you sweetheart if you'd spot me fifty papes.

(The other NEWSIES laugh.)

WIESEL

Drop the cash and move it along.

RACE

(slapping down his coin)

Whatever happened to romance?

WIESEL

Fifty for the Race. Next!

CRUTCHIE

Good morning, Mr. Wiesel.

WIESEL

Fifty papes for Crutchie.

(DAVEY, a 17-year-old boy who appears out of his element, and his kid brother LES are next in line.)

Have a look at this: a new kid.

LES

I'm new too!

RACE

Don't worry, kid - rubs right off.

DAVEY

I'll take twenty newspapers, please.

WIESEL

Twenty for the new kid. Let's see the dime.

DAVEY

I'll pay you when I sell them.

WIESEL

Funny, kid. C'mon, cash up front.

DAVEY

But whatever I don't sell, you buy back, right?

WIESEL

Certainly. And every time you lose a tooth I put a penny under your pillow. This kid's a riot. C'mon. Cough up the cash or blow.

(DAVEY hands over a dime, gets his papers, and looks them over.)

Come on, move along. Albert, lemme see your money.

ALBERT

You have a very interestin' face. Ever think of gettin' into the movin' pictures?

WIESEL

You think I could?

ALBERT

Sure. Buy a ticket, they let anyone in.

DAVEY

Sorry. Excuse me. I paid for twenty but you gave me nineteen.

(EVERYONE freezes and watches.)

WIESEL

You seen how nice I was to dis new kid? And what did I get for my civility?
Ungrounded accusations.

DAVEY

I just want what I paid for.

OSCAR

He said beat it!

(The DELANCEYS start to crack their knuckles when JACK swoops in and quickly counts the papers.)

JACK

New kid's right, Weasel. Ya gave him nineteen. I'm sure it was an honest mistake on account'a Oscar can't count to twenty with his shoes on.

(OSCAR threatens to attack. WIESEL pushes him back and tosses another paper to DAVEY.)

WIESEL

Here. Now take a hike.

JACK

(flipping a coin onto the counter)

Give him another fifty papes.

DAVEY

I don't want more papes.

JACK

What kind'a newsie don't want more papes?

(OSCAR hands DAVEY a stack of papers. DAVEY follows JACK with them.)

DAVEY

I'm no charity case. I don't even know you.

LES

His name's Jack.

CRUTCHIE

This here is the famous Jack Kelly. He once escaped jail on the back of Teddy Roosevelt's carriage. Made all the papes.

JACK

(to LES)

How old are you, kid?

LES

I'm ten. Almost.

JACK

If anybody asks, you're seven. Younger sells more papes, and if we're gonna be partners...

DAVEY

Who said we want a partner?

CRUTCHIE

Sellin' with Jack is the chance of a lifetime. You learn from him, you learn from the best.

DAVEY

If he's the best, what's he need with me?

JACK

'Cause you got a little brother and I don't. That puss could easy sell a thousand papes a week.

(to LES)

Look sad, kid.

(LES makes a sad face.)

We're gonna make millions.

LES

This is my brother David. I'm Les.

JACK

Nice to meet ya, Davey. My two bits come off the top, then we split everything 70-30.

LES

50-50! You wouldn't try to pull a fast one on a little kid.

JACK

60-40 and that's my final offer.

LES

Deal.

(JACK spits in his hand and holds it out to shake. LES copies him and they shake.)

DAVEY

That's disgusting.

JACK

It's just business.

(to ALL)

Newsies, hit the streets. The sun is up, the headline stinks, and this kid ain't gettin' any younger!

#3 - *Carrying the Banner (Tag)*

Newsies

NEWSIES

WE'LL BE OUT THERE
CARRYING THE BANNER MAN TO MAN
WE'RE ALWAYS OUT THERE
SOAKIN' EVERY 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!
OH, AH, AH
GO!

(The NEWSIES exit as the scene shifts to...)

SCENE TWO: Pulitzer's Office, Afternoon

(Editor SEITZ, secretary HANNAH, and accountant BUNSEN huddle in a business meeting. The mogul, JOSEPH PULITZER, is having his hair cut by NUNZIO, the barber.)

PULITZER

Gentlemen, the *World* is in trouble. Our circulation is down for the third quarter in a row.

SEITZ

But, Mr. Pulitzer, every paper's circulation is down since the war ended.

PULITZER

Whoever said "war is hell" wasn't trying to sell newspapers.

BUNSEN

We could use an exciting headline.

PULITZER

What have we got today?

SEITZ

The trolley strike.

PULITZER

That's not exciting? It's epic!

HANNAH

It's boring. Folks wanna know, "Is the trolley comin' or ain't it?" No one cares why.

SEITZ

And the strike's about to be settled. Governor Roosevelt just put his support behind the workers.

PULITZER

That man is a socialist.

SEITZ

Teddy Roosevelt is no socialist. He's an American hero.

PULITZER

The man wants to outlaw football for being too violent. Football! Violent?! You're right. He's no socialist. He's a commie!

NUNZIO

Mr. Pulitzer, please, you must try to sit still.

PULITZER

Gentlemen, please, you are making Nunzio nervous. And when Nunzio gets nervous, I don't look pretty.

(PULITZER sits back.)

HANNAH

You never liked Roosevelt. You wrote an editorial against him day after day when he ran for governor. And guess what? He got elected.

PULITZER

How can I influence voters if they're not reading my opinion?

SEITZ

Big photos attract readers.

PULITZER

Do you know what big photos cost?

BUNSEN

But without flashy photos or headlines, how are we supposed to sell more papers?

PULITZER

There's an answer right before your eyes. You're not thinking this through. People...

#4 - The Bottom Line

Pulitzer, Seitz, Bunsen, Hannah

(PULITZER)

~~HE KNOWS WHEN HE'S CUTTING ME THE
TRIM A BIT HERE AND THEN TRIM A BIT THERE
JUST A MODEST ADJUSTMENT CAN GETEN THE BOTTOM LINE~~

~~NEWSIES~~

Mr. Pulitzer, please.

~~PULITZER~~

~~SHAVING IS TRICKY. THE RAZOR SHOULD FLOAT
SHAVE ME TOO CLOSE, AND YOU MAY CUT MY THROAT
IT'S THE SIMPLEST SOLUTIONS
THAT BOLSTER THE BOTTOM LINE~~

BUNSEN

But how does that help us sell more papers?

HANNAH

We don't sell papers, silly. Newsies sell papers.

BUNSEN

I've got it! Right now we charge the newsies fifty cents for a hundred papers.

PULITZER

Yes...

BUNSEN

But if we raised their price to sixty cents per hundred...

PULITZER

Now you're getting somewhere...

SEITZ

A mere tenth of a penny per paper.

BUNSEN

Every single newsie would have to sell twenty-five more papers just to earn the same amount as always.

PULITZER

My thought exactly. It's genius.

HANNAH

It's going to be awfully rough on those children.

PULITZER

Nonsense. I'm giving them a real life lesson in economics. I couldn't offer them a better education if they were my own.

~~GIVE ME A WEEK AND I'LL TRAIN THEM TO BE
LIKE AN ARMY THAT'S MARCHING TO WAR
PROUD OF THEMSELVES AND SO GRATEFUL TO ME
THEY'LL BE BEGGING TO PAY EVEN MORE!~~

~~WHEN THERE'S DIRT ON OUR SHOES, BOYS
FOR GOD'S SAKE, RELAX!
WHY THROW THEM OUT?
ALL WE NEED IS SOME WAX
LISTEN WELL TO THESE BARBERSHOP LESSONS
FOR THEY'LL SEE YOU THROUGH!~~

~~SEITZ, HANNAH, BUNSEN~~

~~WHEN YOU'RE STUCK IN THE MUCK, YOU'LL BE FINE
YOU'LL ERASE ANY TRACE OF DECLINE~~

~~SEITZ~~

~~WITH A TRIM!~~

~~HANNAH~~

~~AND A SNIP!~~

RACE

I got midtown.

JO JO

I got the Bronx.

BUTTONS

And I got the Bowery.

JACK

Specs, you take Queens. Tommy Boy, you take the Eastside. And who wants Brooklyn?

(The NEWSIES cringe and look away.)

C'mon. Brooklyn. Spot Conlon's turf. Finch, you tellin' me you're scared of Brooklyn?

FINCH

I ain't scared of no turf. But that Spot Conlon gets me a little jittery.

JACK

Me and Davey will take Brooklyn.

DAVEY

(still struggling)

Me? I have to...

(KATHERINE enters.)

KATHERINE

Why's everyone so scared of Brooklyn?

JACK

(smiling)

What're you doin' here?

KATHERINE

Asking a question. Have you got an answer?

JACK

Brooklyn is the sixth largest city in the entire world. You got Brooklyn, you hit the motherlode.

(sidling up to KATHERINE)

For someone who works for the *New York Sun*, you spend an awful lot of time hanging around at the *World*. So, what's that about? You followin' me?

RACE

It would be a pleasure to tell Weasel myself.

JACK

Yeah? And who tells Pulitzer? Davey?

DAVEY

I don't know... I guess...

(giving in)

You do, Mr. President.

JACK

(to DAVEY)

That's right, we do! What do we tell 'em?

DAVEY

The newspaper owners need to respect your rights as employees.

JACK

Pulitzer and Hearst gotta respect the rights of the workin' kids of this city.

DAVEY

They can't just change the rules when they feel like it.

JACK

That's right. We do the work so we get a say.

DAVEY

(finally committing)

We've got a union.

LES

Yeah!

~~JACK~~

~~PULITZER AND HEARST, THEY THINK WE'RE NOTHIN'
ARE WE NOTHIN'?~~

~~NEWSIES~~

~~NO!~~

~~DAVEY~~

~~They need to understand that we're not enslaved to them. We're free agents.~~

~~JACK~~

~~PULITZER AND HEARST, THEY THINK THEY GOT US
DO THEY GOT US?~~

SCENE FOUR: Pulitzer's Office & Cellar, Afternoon

(The MAYOR, SEITZ, BUNSEN, and PULITZER are in a heated discussion. KATHERINE sits, listening quietly.)

MAYOR

... but I've read your editorials, Mr. Pulitzer. How can you express so much sympathy for the trolley workers and yet have none for the newsies?

PULITZER

Because the trolley workers are striking for a fair contract. The newsies are striking against me!

MAYOR

I'd spare you this embarrassment if I could, but the burlesque house is private property.

BUNSEN

He can't order a raid without legal cause.

PULITZER

Mr. Mayor, would the fact that this rally is organized by an escaped convict be enough to shut it down?

MAYOR

An escaped convict?

PULITZER

A fugitive from one of your own institutions. A convicted thief, at large, reeking mischief on our law-abiding community.

(turns his desk chair around to reveal SNYDER and holds out the newspaper)

Mr. Snyder, which one is he?

SNYDER

(pointing to the photo)

That one there: Jack Kelly.

MAYOR

And how do you know this boy?

SNYDER

His is not a pleasant story. He was first sentenced to my Refuge for loitering and vagrancy, but his total disregard of authority has made him a frequent visitor.

MAYOR

You called him a thief and escaped convict.

SNYDER

After his release I caught him myself, red handed, trafficking stolen food and clothing. He was last sentenced to six months, but the willful ruffian escaped.

PULITZER

So you'd be doing the city a service removing this criminal from our streets.

MAYOR

If that's the case, we can take him in quietly and—

PULITZER

(exploding)

What good would quiet do me? I want a public example made of him.

(HANNAH rushes into the office.)

HANNAH

Mr. Pulitzer – the boy, Jack Kelly, is here.

PULITZER

Here?

HANNAH

Just outside. He's asked to see you.

PULITZER

Ask and ye shall be received. Mr. Snyder, if you please. Sit.

(PULITZER directs SNYDER to retreat to the shadowy corner and spins KATHERINE in the swivel chair so she's hidden as well. HANNAH escorts JACK into the room.)

HANNAH

Mr. Jack Kelly.

JACK

Afternoon, boys...

PULITZER

And which Jack Kelly is this? The charismatic union organizer, or the petty thief and escaped convict?

JACK

Which one gives us more in common?

PULITZER

Impudence is in bad taste when crawling for mercy.

JACK

Crawlin'? That's a laugh. I just dropped by with an invite. Seems a few hundred of your employees are rallying to discuss recent disagreements. I thought it only fair to invite you to state your case straight to the fellas. So what'd'ya say, Joe? Want I should save you a spot on the bill?

PULITZER

You are as shameless and disrespectful a creature as I was told. Do you know what I was doing when I was your age, boy? I was fighting in a war.

JACK

Yeah? How'd that turn out for ya?

PULITZER

It taught me a lesson that shaped my life. You don't win a war on the battlefield. It's the headline that crowns the victor.

JACK

I'll keep that in mind when New York wakes up to front page photos of our rally.

PULITZER

Rally till the cows come home. Not a paper in town will publish a word. And if it's not in the papers, it never happened.

JACK

You may run this city, but there are some of us who can't be bullied. Even some reporters...

PULITZER

Such as that young woman who made you yesterday's news? Talented girl. And beautiful as well, don't you think?

JACK

I'll tell her you said so.

PULITZER

No need. She can hear for herself. Can't you, darling?

(KATHERINE stands up. JACK steps back in surprise.)

I trust you know my daughter, Katherine.

(lets that sink in)

Yes. My daughter. You are probably asking, why the *nom de plume* and why doesn't my daughter work for me? Good questions. I offered Katherine a life of wealth and leisure. Instead she chose to pursue a career. And she was showing real promise, until this recent lapse. But you're done with all of that now, aren't you, sweetheart?

KATHERINE

Jack, I—

PULITZER

Don't trouble the boy with your problems, dearest. Mr. Kelly has a plateful of his own. Wouldn't you say so, Mr. Snyder?

(SNYDER steps into sight.)

SNYDER

Hello, Jack.

(JACK tries to run for the door, but is stopped by the DELANCEYS. He realizes he's trapped.)

PULITZER

Ow! Does anyone else feel a noose tightening? But allow me to offer an alternate scenario: you attend the rally and speak against this hopeless strike, and I'll see your criminal record expunged and your pockets filled with enough cash to carry you, in a first-class train compartment, from New York to New Mexico and beyond.

(to KATHERINE)

You did say he wanted to travel west, didn't you?

JACK

There ain't a person in this room who don't know you stink.

PULITZER

And if they know me, they know I don't care. Mark my words, boy. Defy me, and I will have you and every one of your friends locked up in The Refuge. I know you're Mr. Tough Guy, but it's not right to condemn that little crippled boy to conditions like that. And what about your pal Davey and his baby brother, ripped from their loving family and tossed to the rats? Will they ever be able to thank you enough?

#16 - The Bottom Line (Reprise)

Pulitzer, Seitz, Bunsen

(PULITZER)

~~HE'S RUNNING OLD-KID
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?
COME ON CONVINCE
I WIN EITHER
YOUR BET SURRENDER
WE ALWAYS THE BOTTOM LINE~~

Gentlemen, escort our guest to the cellar so he might reflect in solitude.

(NEWSIES)

BUT LET US SEIZE THE DAY

(The NEWSIES continue to hum as a drum beats steadily.)

SPOT

Have a look out there, Mr. Pulitzer. In case you ain't figured it out, we got you surrounded.

JACK

New York is closed for business. Paralyzed. You can't get a paper or a shoe shine. You can't send a message or ride an elevator or cross the Brooklyn Bridge. You can't even leave your own building. So, what's your next move?

(BUNSEN rushes back into the room in a tizzy.)

BUNSEN

Mr. Pulitzer, the Mayor is here along with your daughter and... oh, you're not going to believe who else!

(He walks the MAYOR, KATHERINE, MEDDA, and GOVERNOR TEDDY ROOSEVELT.)

MAYOR

Good morning, Mr. Pulitzer. I think you know the Governor.

PULITZER

Governor Roosevelt?

ROOSEVELT

Joseph, Joseph, Joseph. What have you done now?

PULITZER

I'm certain when you hear my explanation—

ROOSEVELT

Thanks to Miss Medda Larkin bringing your daughter to my office, I already have a thorough grasp of the situation — graphic illustrations included.

(brandishes Jack's drawings)

Bully is the expression I usually employ to show approval. But in your case I simply mean bully!

(to KATHERINE, referring to JACK)

And is this the boy of whom you spoke?

(to JACK)

How are you, son? I'm told we once shared a carriage ride.

JACK

Pleasure's mine, Mr. Governor.

ROOSEVELT

(to PULITZER)

Well, Joe, don't just stand there letting those children sing endlessly. Give them the good news.

PULITZER

What good news?

ROOSEVELT

That you've come to your senses and rolled back prices. Unless, of course, you want to invite a full state senate investigation into your employment practices.

PULITZER

(red with anger)

You wouldn't—

ROOSEVELT

After the pressure you wielded to keep me from office? I'd do it with a smile. Come along, Joseph. There's only one thing worse than a hard heart, and that's a soft head.

(PULITZER growls and postures.)

And think of the happiness you'll bring those children.

(to KATHERINE)

He doesn't do happiness, does he?

PULITZER

(cornered, shifting tactics)

Mr. Kelly, if I may speak to you... alone.

(The OTHERS withdraw from the room.)

ROOSEVELT

(to JACK)

Keep your eyes on the stars, and your feet on the ground. You can do this.

(ROOSEVELT exits. JACK and PULITZER are alone.)

PULITZER

I cannot put the price back where it was.

(JACK starts to move away.)

(PULITZER)

I'm sorry, I can't. There are other considerations—

JACK

I get it. You need to save face front of all these folks. I'm young, I ain't stupid.

PULITZER

Thank you for understanding.

JACK

But I got constituents with a legitimate gripe.

PULITZER

What if I reduce the raise by half and get the others to do the same? It's a compromise we can all live with.

JACK

But you eat our losses. From now on, any papes we can't sell, you buy back — full price.

PULITZER

That's never been on the table! What's to stop newsies from taking hundreds of papers they can't sell? My costs will explode!

JACK

No newsie is gonna break his back haulin' around papes he can't sell. But if they can take a few more with no risk, they might sell 'em and your circulation would begin to grow...

(aping PULITZER)

"It's a compromise we can all live with."

PULITZER

(calmly considering)

That's not a bad head you've got on your shoulders.

(JACK spits in his hand and holds it out for PULITZER to shake.)

JACK

Deal?

PULITZER

That's disgusting.

JACK

Just the price of doin' business.

(PULITZER spits in his hand. JACK grabs it and shakes. The deal has been sealed!)

