

ACT ONE

1 — Overture

(Orchestra)

Scene 1

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.

ORPHANS

A N N I E

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.