

# Synopsis

## ACT ONE

**Scene 1:** It is 3 A.M. on a chilly morning in early December, 1933. Six orphans are asleep in the dormitory of the Girls' Annex of The New York City Municipal Orphanage. The orphans are Molly, who is 6; Kate, 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 is just waking up from a dream and crying out for her mother. The other orphans wake up and begin arguing. Annie, who is 11, runs in with a bucket. She has been cleaning because she is being punished by Miss Hannigan, the villainous director of the orphanage. Annie comforts Molly, who begs her to read the note that Annie's parents left when they abandoned her. Pepper reminds the group that they also left Annie one-half of a silver locket and kept the other half with a promise to reclaim her one day. Annie then pulls Molly close to her and sings about the parents she imagines, but has never known ("Maybe").

Thinking about her parents inspires Annie to run away from the orphanage to search for them. She packs a bag and is ready to leave when she is discovered by Miss Hannigan. Miss Hannigan makes all the orphans get up to scrub floors and strip beds to "pay" for Annie's misbehavior. Their complaints that it is four o'clock in the morning fall on deaf ears. As they clean, the orphans complain about their difficult circumstances ("It's A Hard Knock Life").

In the morning, when Bundles McCloskey, the laundry man, comes to make a pick-up from the orphanage, the orphans take advantage of the fact he is flirting with Miss Hannigan by sneaking Annie out of the building in a laundry bag. Realizing Annie has escaped, Miss Hannigan calls for the police as the orphans celebrate.

**Scene 2:** Annie is on a street lined with tenements when she encounters a mutt, who is being chased by dogcatchers. She rescues him and sings "Tomorrow," expressing her feelings that both she and the dog have to believe everything will be fine for them in the future. When a policeman makes her prove the mutt is her dog, she names it Sandy on the spot and then calls it to come to her. The dog miraculously responds and they become a team.

**Scene 3:** Annie comes upon a Hooverville (a Depression style shantytown of jerry-built shacks under a bridge on the East River). The residents of the makeshift town, who have lost their homes and their fortunes in the economic turmoil that is enveloping America, are cooking stew over an outdoor fire. They sing about their plight, for which they blame Herbert Hoover, the former president ("We'd Like to Thank You"). The group befriends Annie and Sandy, offering them stew. Annie tries to cheer them up, insisting the future will be brighter. A policeman breaks up the crowd, driving the squatters away from their makeshift homes. Annie and Sandy run away.

**Scene 4:** Back at the orphanage, Miss Hannigan is being tormented by the orphans. She expresses her disgust with her lot in life as the keeper of "Little Girls." She has just settled down to enjoy a radio soap opera, when a policeman returns Annie. As Miss Hannigan is threatening Annie, Grace Farrell, an attractive, well-dressed young woman, enters carrying an attaché case. She is the private secretary of the billionaire Oliver Warbucks, who wants to invite an orphan to his mansion for Christmas. Annie campaigns for the opportunity but Miss Hannigan does everything in her power to discredit Annie, even claiming the child is a drunk and a liar. Grace is instantly drawn to Annie and is determined to bring her to the Warbucks mansion. She demands that Miss Hannigan sign the required papers and she escorts Annie to a waiting limousine.

**Scene 5:** Grace brings Annie to Mr. Warbucks's mansion and introduces her to the servants. Annie is in awe of her new surroundings and she is made to feel completely welcome by the staff ("I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here"). Oliver Warbucks arrives on the scene. He is a powerful figure in the country and a pivotal player in the current economic crisis. He rarely stops thinking about business and is taken aback by Annie's appearance in his house. He had expected the orphan to be a boy and is puzzled by the prospect of dealing with a little girl. Yet almost immediately he feels a deep connection to Annie's spunk and personality, which remind him of his own humble beginnings. Contrary to his usual behavior, he decides to take a night off. Warbucks escorts Annie to see a movie at the Roxy, treats her to an ice cream soda and a hansom cab ride around Central Park.

**Scene 6:** As she tours New York with Warbucks and Grace, Annie sees the city in a new way ("N.Y.C."). At the end of the evening, Annie is exhausted and Warbucks carries her home. As they leave Times Square,

the faithful Sandy enters and then forlornly wanders off in search of Annie.

**Scene 7:** Grace arrives at the orphanage to tell Miss Hannigan that Oliver Warbucks wants to adopt Annie. She leaves just as Miss Hannigan's brother, Rooster, arrives with his girlfriend, Lily. Rooster has come to borrow money from his sister. When Miss Hannigan refuses, he reminds her of their mother's lullaby ("Easy Street"). As they lament their own misfortunes, Miss Hannigan shares the news of Annie's pending adoption by Warbucks.

**Scene 8:** Warbucks is talking on the telephone to the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. A package from Tiffany & Co. arrives, which contains a silver locket for Annie. Warbucks tells Annie that he wants to adopt her and gives her the locket. Instead of the happy response he imagined, Annie begins to weep. When he learns about her dream of finding her parents and the secret of the half-locket she has treasured for so long, he sets his own feelings aside and orders an exhaustive search for Annie's parents ("You Won't be an Orphan for Long"). The first act ends with Annie's optimistic reprise of "Tomorrow." Warbucks laments his loss, but is resolved to find her real parents.

## ACT TWO

**Scene 1:** Annie and Warbucks are guests on the popular Bert Healy radio show. They make a plea for Annie's parents to return and Warbucks offers \$50,000 to anyone who can prove they are her mother and father. The show closes with the radio actors singing "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile."

**Scene 2:** The orphans are listening to Bert Healy's radio show and singing their own version of "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile." Miss Hannigan, furious about Annie's good fortune, sends them out of the room. Rooster and Lily arrive, disguised as Ralph and Shirley Mudge, claiming to be Annie's parents. They reveal who they are to Miss Hannigan and share their plot to claim Annie and the \$50,000 reward. Once they have the money, they plan to do away with Annie and live in the lap of luxury. ("Easy Street - Reprise")

**Scene 3:** President Roosevelt and members of his cabinet are listening to a popular radio commentator attack the President's policies. Warbucks and Annie arrive in the Oval Office. As Warbucks and the government officials discuss the depressing facts about the economic situation (strikes, riots, floods, dust storms and crime), Annie counters by singing "Tomorrow." The president reacts to her viewpoint with enthusiasm and makes the cabinet members sing along. When Warbucks and Annie hear the news that hundreds of people claiming to be Annie's parents are surrounding the Warbucks mansion, they immediately return to New York. Inspired by Annie's optimism, the cabinet members and the President invent the New Deal.

**Scene 4:** At the mansion, Annie and Warbucks discover that Grace has already interviewed and dismissed the throng of people who claimed to be Annie's parents - no one mentioned anything about a locket. The maker of Annie's locket has also reported that the purchasers cannot be traced. It appears that Annie's quest cannot have a happy ending. Trying to console her, Warbucks declares his own feelings about Annie and her importance in his life ("Something Was Missing").

**Scene 5:** Warbucks's plans to adopt Annie are set in motion, as are the preparations for the party to celebrate the adoption. Annie and Warbucks express their delight with the idea of becoming father and daughter ("I Don't Need Anything But You"). Everyone at the mansion becomes involved in the preparations for the festivities. As they dress Annie and decorate the mansion, they sing the praises of "Annie." As Supreme Court Justice Brandeis is about to pronounce the the adoption final, Rooster and Lily, disguised as Ralph and Shirley Mudge, appear with the other half of Annie's locket.

They also have Annie's birth certificate, which has been supplied by Miss Hannigan. They announce their intention to take Annie home to live with them in New Jersey on a pig farm. Warbucks convinces them to let Annie spend Christmas with him at the mansion. The Mudges can pick her up the next day. They agree and leave. Everyone toasts Annie Mudge. As Grace escorting Annie upstairs, she remembers having seen Mr. Mudge before. Warbucks calls President Roosevelt to ask a favor.

**Scene 6:** The next morning, Annie waits apprehensively for the Mudges to claim her. President Roosevelt arrives with the news that the FBI has analyzed the handwriting on the note Annie's parents left behind to trace their identity. The investigation revealed her real parents were named David and Margaret Bennett and that they are dead. The Mudges are impostors. Annie and Warbucks declare their love for each other. They realize only Miss Hannigan could have given the Mudges the locket and birth certificate. Miss Hannigan arrives with the orphans to celebrate Christmas. As the Mudges arrive to claim Annie, another communication from the FBI reveals their true identities as Rooster and Lily. Miss Hannigan tries to save herself by pretending to have no association with them and begins leading the orphans in Christmas

carols. All three are hauled off to jail and Annie introduces the orphans to Warbucks. She promises they will have a much better life in the future and everyone sings about "A New Deal For Christmas." A huge package arrives for Annie: when she opens it Sandy jumps into her arms.