

Character descriptions

JACK KELLY, Age 17 to 22. Jack Kelly is one of the newsies, and their de facto leader. However, Jack is a bit of a reluctant rebel. By nature, Jack is independent, cerebral, and romantic. He is an artist, and helps out vaudeville star Miss Medda Larkin by painting the set backdrop for her acts. He dreams of leaving New York City behind and heading out West. Jack often dismisses the challenges of the life he currently leads, determined not to invest in changing his life in New York when he is sure that he will soon be rid of it all and escape to his beloved Santa Fe. Nonetheless, when the newsies turn to Jack in search of leadership, Jack steps up to the plate. Ever the pessimist, however, Jack is quickly discouraged when things turn sour. Jack's idealism is often challenged by his real-world knowledge of the difficulty of being young, poor and helpless -- but when he uses his intelligence and charm to fight for what he believes in, he becomes a David who poses a serious threat to Mr. Pulitzer's Goliath. Katherine, who eventually reciprocates Jack's romantic feelings for her, helps him to see that there is something to believe in, and it's worth fighting for. Fiercely protective of his best friend, Crutchie, and strongly loyal, Jack isn't afraid to use his voice to attain better conditions for the working kids of New York City. Though living on the streets has given him a tough-guy exterior, Jack has a big heart and can demonstrate a sweet vulnerability – especially when it comes to bantering with a certain female reporter. Must have a great pop tenor voice and sense of physicality.

KATHERINE PLUMBER, Age 17 to 22. Katherine is an ambitious young journalist at the New York World. She works the “women's” columns, but desperately wants to be tackle serious political issues and make her mark as a respected, impactful reporter. Secretly, Katherine is the daughter of newspaper tyrant Joseph Pulitzer, the editor and owner of the New York World whose oppressive policies cause the newsies to strike and who the newsies strike against. A determined and independent young woman, Katherine eschews the conventions of society and fights for what she thinks is truly right. Despite their different backgrounds, she falls in love with Jack Kelly. In their flirtations, Katherine holds her own, and doesn't allow Jack to charm her into forgetting what she wants. In fact, Katherine takes the initiative to kiss Jack, first. Her independence and confidence is magnetic. Katherine suffers no fools, though, and doesn't allow the moody Jack to hold her back, and even without him Katherine maintains her position on the front lines of the newsies strike. Katherine is no damsel in distress, and while she is easy and free with the boys, she never loses her femininity. Must have excellent contemporary pop sound with a high belt.

CRUTCHIE is a dedicated newsie with a bum leg that's painful, but helps sell more papes. Though he walks with the assistance of a crutch, Crutchie doesn't let it define him; when in a jam, Jack Kelly's best friend relies on a goofy- sweet sense of humour and optimistic resilience. Crutchie is the heart of the resistance. Though his movement will suggest his bum leg, Crutchie should still be included in the dance numbers.

DAVEY, Les's straight-laced, bright big brother starts selling newspapers to help his family earn a living, but becomes swept up in the fervor of the strike. A leader in his own right who is learning to use his voice to uplift others, Davey is the brains of the resistance.

LES, Davey's cheeky younger brother, is inspired by the freedom of the newsies and loves their independent lifestyle. A precocious and natural newsie, Les is an intuitive salesboy and a pint-sized charmer. He should present as younger than the other newsies.

MEDDA LARKIN, inspired by vaudeville performer Aida Overton Walker, this big-voiced saloon singer and star of the Bowery offers her theater as a safe haven for the newsies. An astute entertainer with great comic delivery, she's a good friend to Jack and stands firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

JOSEPH PULITZER, a pompous businessman through and through, owns the *World* and is concerned solely with the bottom line. Katherine's no-nonsense father, Pulitzer doesn't sympathize with the strikers, but he does eventually – and grudgingly – respect Jack.

SEITZ, editor, advises Pulitzer, but ultimately admires the kids' newspaper.

BUNSEN, Pulitzer's bookkeeper, comes up with the idea to raise the newsies' price per paper.

HANNAH is Pulitzer's practical and insightful secretary.

NUNZIO is Pulitzer's barber.

The **GUARD** removes the newsies from Pulitzer's building.

WIESEL, or "Weasel," runs the distribution window for the *World* and knows most of the newsies by name. Assisted by the intimidating Delancey brothers, who keep order by any means necessary, Wiesel is Pulitzer's disgruntled paper-pusher.

BOWERY BEAUTIES are female performers at Medda's Theater.

The **MAYOR** of New York City rebuffs Pulitzer's attempts to shut down the newsies' strike.

GOVERNOR TEDDY ROOSEVELT, a well-respected lifelong public servant, inspires Jack to stand up to Pulitzer.

The following roles will not all be included. Some will require doubling

SPOT CONLON, the proud leader of the Brooklyn newsies, boasts an intimidating reputation and a short singing solo in "Brooklyn's Here."

NEWSIES, including **ALBERT, BUTTONS, ELMER, FINCH, HENRY, IKE, JO JO, MIKE, MUSH, RACE, ROMEO, SPECS,**

SPLASHER, and **TOMMY BOY**, are some of the hard-working kids of New York City who go on strike for a liveable wage.

SCABS are three newsies who are hesitant to join the strike.

DARCY, who can double as a newsie, is the upper-class kid of a publisher who sides with the newsies.

BILL, who can double as a newsie, is the son of William Randolph Hearst who joins the newsies' cause.

PHOTOGRAPHER takes the triumphant photo of the newsies at the end of "Seize the Day."

OSCAR & MORRIS DELANCEY, toughs who work at the distribution window for the *World*, take the side of the publishers in the strike and are known to use their fists to make a point.

GOONS assist the Delanceys in roughing up the newsies at the end of Act One.

STAGE MANAGER introduces Medda's act.

NUNS (3) offer breakfast to the hungry newsies. Feel free to cast additional nuns.

WOMAN is a newspaper customer.

MR. JACOBI allows the newsies to congregate in his restaurant to plan their strike – when he doesn't have any paying customers, that is.

SNYDER, the crooked and sinister warden of The Refuge, a filthy and horrible orphanage, is concerned only with catching enough kids to keep his government checks coming.

POLICEMEN assist Snyder and turn against the newsies in the fight that concludes Act One.