

General Workshop and Audition Excerpt 1

This is very early in the show following #2 Fugue for Tinhorns by Nicely, Benny and Rusty. It introduces Sarah as the strong and determined Salvation Army mission leader, focused on saving souls by getting gamblers and drinkers to turn away from those sins, “the forces of evil”, and repent. Against her altruistic crusading is set her target – the legally unemployed soft underbelly of male NYC. It is humorously stereotyped by larger than life male characters who are narrow in outlook and experience, intellectual mediocrities but adherents (mostly) to their own code of honour which sees them loyal to each other in the face of challenges from outside including other “gangs” and wives. With the exception of Sky, these are the bottom of the heap of the criminal class – far more successful in the bar and in their dreams than they are on the street. Money is merely a means of feeding their addictions – and they are all addicted to gambling. Consequently, none of them hold onto earnings for long and have anything of any significance to their names. Shame for this particular group is not being able to stage their famous crap game when visitors come in search of it and thus the tension develops. For all his bluster, their perennial “enemy”, Lieutenant Brannigan, is really very similar to those he chases hence his lack of success in catching them.

(SARAH)

Come here and talk to me. Do not think of me as Sergeant Sarah Brown, but as Sarah Brown, your sister.

Join me, Brothers and Sisters, in resisting the Devil, and we can put him to flight forever.

(SARAH looks at ARVIDE hopelessly – he motions to her encouragingly)

Remember, friends, it is the Save-A-Soul Mission –

(Slowly stepping down from the box)

—located at 409 West 49th Street, open all day and all night, with a special prayer meeting this Thursday at—

#3a - Exit of Sarah and the Mission Band

NICELY

(Looking after them as he crosses to Stage C., followed by BENNY)

Poor Miss Sarah! I wonder why a refined doll like her is mixed up in the Mission dodge.

BENNY

She is a beautiful doll, all right, with one hundred percent eyes.

NICELY

It is too bad that such a doll wastes all her time being good. How can she make any money from that?

BENNY

Maybe she owns a piece of the Mission.

NICELY

Yeah.

(HARRY THE HORSE enters from L.1, crosses to Benny)

HARRY

Hey! Benny Southstreet!

(THEY shake hands)

BENNY

Harry the Horse! How are you! You know Nicely-Nicely Johnson.

HARRY

Yeah. How goes it?

NICELY

Nicely, nicely, thank you.

HARRY

Tell me, what about Nathan Detroit? Is he got a place for his crap game?

BENNY

(Whispers back)

We don't know yet.

NICELY

The heat is on.

BENNY

He's still looking for a place.

HARRY

Well, tell him I'm loaded and looking for action.

(Crosses to R., past Nicely)

I just acquired five thousand potatoes.

BENNY

Five thousand bucks!

NICELY

Where did you acquire it?

HARRY

I collected the reward on my father.

(Exits R.1)

BENNY

Everybody is looking for action. I wish Nathan finds a —

(He stops as BRANNIGAN enters — gets paper at newsstand — crosses to Benny)

NICELY

Why, Lieutenant Brannigan! Mr. Southstreet, it is Lieutenant Brannigan of the New York Police Department.

BENNY

(Crosses to R.)

A pleasure.

(Moves away)

BRANNIGAN

Any of you guys seen Nathan Detroit?

BENNY

Which Nathan Detroit is that?

(BRANNIGAN folds his paper with an abrupt movement and faces the two men)

BRANNIGAN

I mean the Nathan Detroit who's been running a floating crap game around here, and getting away with it by moving it to a different spot every night.

NICELY

Why are you telling us this — Your Honor?

BRANNIGAN

I am telling you this because I know you two bums work for Detroit, rustling up customers for his crap game.

NICELY

We do?

BRANNIGAN

Yeah!

NICELY

Oh!

BRANNIGAN

You can tell him for me: I know that right now he's running around trying to find a spot. Well, nobody's gonna give him a spot, because they all know that Brannigan is breathing down their neck!

(Starts to exit. NATHAN enters from above newsstand, not seeing Brannigan)

NICELY

Hi, Nathan!

NATHAN

Fellas, I'm having terrible trouble. Everybody's scared on account of that lousy Brannigan, and I can't—

BRANNIGAN

Something wrong, Mr. Detroit?

NATHAN

(A sickly grimace)

Oh, hello, Lieutenant. I hope you don't think I was talking about you. There are other lousy Brannigans.

BRANNIGAN

Detroit, I have just been talking to your colleagues about your crap game. I imagine you are having trouble finding a place.

NATHAN

Well, the heat is on, as you must know from the fact that you now have to live on your salary.

(BRANNIGAN glares and exits L.1)

BENNY

(Crosses to Nathan)

Did you find a place?

NATHAN

What does that cop want from me? What am I—a sex maniac? I merely run a crap game for the convenience of those who want a little action, in return for which I take a small cut. Is that a crime! Yeah!