

I WAS AN ORPHAN TRAIN RIDER

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Cast of Characters

REVEREND CHARLES BRACE	Founder Children's Aid Society; M 30's
TIP	Homeless child; M 10-12
LUCKY	Homeless child, friend of Tip; M 12-15
FRANK	Homeless child, friend to Tip and Lucky; M 12-15
DRUNK MAN	M 40's
BRACKETT	Policeman in the Four Points area ; M 30's
DR. BAIN	Drunken Doctor; M 30's
POLICEMAN	Policeman in the Four Points area; M 20's
KATIE MOLONY	Daughter of Siobhan Molony; F 10
SIOBHAN MOLONY	Irish immigrant. Mother to Katie; F late 20's
JEFFERS	Policeman in the Four Points area; M 20's
CIARA	Daughter to Annie; F 8 - 10
ANNIE CONNOLLY	Irish immigrant. Mother to Ciara; F 20's
TOMMY	Irish immigrant. M 20's – 30's
MAGGIE CONNOLLY	Eldest daughter of Annie; F 12-15
MRS. ADDAMS	Secretary to Charles Brace; F 30's
MS. ELLA JAMES	Orphan Train Agent for Charles Brace; F 20's
DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL	First women doctor in the United States and Head of the Dispensary For Poor Women and Children F 30's
MATRON	Matron for the Children's Asylum; F 30's
LYONS	Assistant Agent to Ms. James; F 20's
REVEREND SAMUELS	Methodist Minister in Waterton; M 40's
LUTHER	Farmer in Waterton; M 30's
WIFE 1	Citizen of Waterton; F 20's
MAN 2	Citizen of Waterton; M 20-30
MAN 3	Citizen of Waterton; M 20-30
HENRY STYVETSON	Partially Blind Furniture Maker; M 30's
MARGARET STYVETSON	Wife to Henry; F 30's
ROSE GIBSON	Wife of Walter; F late 20's
WALTER GIBSON	Farmer; M late 20's
HANS BECKER	Immigrant from Sweeden. Farmer; M 30's
SOPHIE BECKER	Wife to Hans; F 30's
THADDEUS JANSEN	Citizen of Waterton; M 30's
LUCY	Orphan

An additional group of orphans that number up to eight. They are indicated in the script as Orphan 1, Orphan 2 etc.

Production Notes

This play is based upon the actual stories of orphan train riders. While the basic stories are true I would consider this historical fiction in that I change locations and combine several characters into one character. While Charles Loring Brace is an actual person who founded The Children's Aid Society and pushed the idea of placing-out children around the nation I have reimagined some of him in order to bring about more dramatic conflict. The time frame is from the winter of 1853 to the winter of 1854.

This play has a cinematic style in the way that scenes merge one to another. I do indicate the use of lighting and sound to anticipate and set emotion and setting. Within the text I use the term "crossfade" to indicate transition from one scene to another. I mean to use that term in it's literal definition, (make a picture or sound appear or be heard gradually as another disappears or becomes silent.) The play should move seamlessly from scene to another. To aid with the filmic quality I indicate the use of lighting, music and sound effects. With that said a lot of the thought should be put into the sound effects, scoring of the piece and the lighting plot.

Additionally, when a hyphen mark is used at the end of a piece of dialogue it is meant to indicate the characters jump right in at the end of sentences.

The play can be double cast and tripled cast as you see fit.

Scene

Various locations in lower Manhattan New York

Time

The winter of 1853

ACT I

AT RISE:

Music. Lights. You see homeless children in a tableau. REVEREND CHARLES BRACE appears upstage. As he speaks he threads his way through the tableau.

BRACE:

If you were to see the eyes... You would not believe them to be the eyes of children. Black empty holes, showing no light of life. Emptiness. Pure emptiness. Their faces, stained with the grime of the streets, and locked, forever, in expressions of pain and fear. I feel the coarseness of a lifetime in their little hands. To what end is their life? I do not know. But day by day the numbers grow and they are becoming a dangerous class. Night after night I walk the streets of Misery Row of Five Points, the putrid smell of decay, the rancorous sounds of sin and from the shadows the sight of children, wandering lifeless, like specters from the underworld. I am a man of God I have chosen a life to spread his word of love, hope, and compassion. God is in everything I see except for this desolate landscape. I see no God here. I see no love, no hope, only children who seem like lifeless, barren islands. It is a nightmare. A nightmare from which I wonder if we'll ever wake.

(Crossfade to a scene outside a bar in the Five Points section in the borough of Manhattan, New York. A mist hangs heavy in the air. Drunken voices are heard from inside the bar along with piano music. Three small boys emerge from the shadows. One has a club another a long thin knife and the third a newspaper.)

TIP

(Holding a newspaper)

I'm hungry.

LUCKY

(Holding a knife)

Shut your pug!

FRANK

(Holding a club)

Gawd you stink Tip.

TIP

I'm sick.

LUCKY

I thought you were hungry.

TIP

I am.

LUCKY

Listen you pikes, shut your traps. I'm needin' you ta listen.

FRANK

What's the big talk for lucky, we smack 'em take our loot and go.

LUCKY

We got a big roller in there.

TIP

Who's that?

LUCKY

Not sure.

FRANK

How do you know this big roller?

LUCKY

Seen him down by the river. Holdin' a handful of dough. I spied him all the way here. Been in there a goodly time so he ought to be lit to and fro. He's a big guy but I figure with the drinks that in 'em he'll fall like a log.

FRANK

I'll crack his knees, Lucky. No lyin' 'bout that.

TIP

Your not sayin' how much we can get.

LUCKY

Tip you'll get your bit. Just cry like a angel and when I get him spun 'round you break his knees Frank.

TIP

An' if he don't fall?

LUCKY

I cut him.

(Pause. A man is seen stumbling from the bar.)

Shhh, just spied our prize. Move boys.

(The boys hide. The man is clearly drunk and is unsteady on his feet. He is singing to himself. LUCKY whistles. TIP approaches the man he pretends to be crying.)

TIP

Sir? Please sir, I'm hungry. By a paper so's I can eat.

DRUNK MAN

What?

TIP

I'm hungry. Buy my paper.

DRUNK MAN

Get lost you scum.

TIP

(Grabbing at the DRUNK MAN'S coat.)

But I need food.

DRUNK MAN

Get off me you rat.

FRANK

(Approaching the DRUNK MAN from behind.)

Hey mister can't you see he's hungry?

DRUNK MAN

What? I know what's going on here! You rats robbin' me?

(FRANK swings his club and knocks the DRUNK MAN in the knees. He screams in pain and falls. FRANK moves to club him again and the DRUNK MAN grabs the club away from FRANK and back hands FRANK to the ground.)

TIP

Frank!

(The DRUNK MAN gets up grabs hold of TIP and proceeds to beat him with the club. LUCKY appears and stabs the DRUNK MAN in the back. He yells out in pain and turns toward LUCKY and grabs him by the throat. LUCKY plunges his knife into the stomach of the DRUNK MAN who then falls to the ground while still choking LUCKY. FRANK comes up and lands several blows to the man until he is lifeless.)

LUCKY

Get his loot.

(TIP rifles through his pockets and retrieves money.)

FRANK

I'll kill him more.

(FRANK kicks the DRUNK MAN Several times.)

TIP

Stop it! We got what we want.

FRANK

Call us rats? I'll kill him some more.

LUCKY

Let's go you pigs.

TIP

I hear somebody coming.

LUCKY

Let's go!

FRANK

You're the rat! Do you hear me! You're the rat!

LUCKY

Let's go!

(LUCKY drags off TIP and FRANK into the darkness. BRACE enters and runs to the man. He looks off in the direction that the kids have run off.)

BRACE

(He checks to see if the man is still alive.)

Dear God, your still breathing.

DRUNK MAN

(Barely audible.)

Those rats got my money.

BRACE

(Yelling into the bar.)

Hey, I have a man hurt out here!

DRUNK MAN

Look at what they done. I'm bleedin' like a pig. No kid does this, ya hear me!

(Piano music stops. Shadows of people appear in the doorway of the bar there is a concerned mummer. A policeman by the name of BRACKETT Enters the scene.)

BRACKETT

What's this?

BRACE

Constable, this man has been a victim of a robbery he's bleeding badly.

(A man, who is obviously tipsy, saunters into the scene. His name is DR. BAIN.)

DR. BAIN

What the hell is happening Brackett?

BRACKETT

Well, Dr. Bain what are you doing this late night?

DR. BAIN

What do you think I'm doin'?

BRACKETT

Don't tell me you tending to some patients inside Brennan's.

DR. BAIN

Just enjoying some fine company.

BRACKETT

Too drunk to do some doctorin'?

DR. BAIN

I probably won't hurt him anymore than he's hurt already. Let me see what I can do.

(DR. BAIN tends to the DRUNK MAN.)

BRACKETT

Who done this?

DRUNK MAN

(Pulls a gun from his coat.)

Rats! I seen there faces.

DR. BAIN

Put that gun away you fool.

BRACKETT

Why didn't you shoot 'em?

DRUNK MAN

They come from nowhere.

DR. BAIN

He's got to get up town. Let's get a carriage.

BRACKETT

We'll flush the area.

(Blows his whistle.)

We'll 'round 'em up so's you can do a little target practice.

DRUNK MAN

If I'm still alive. I'm bleedin' out.

DR. BAIN

Let's get him inside. Hey, give me some help here!

(Several men enter and help the DRUNK MAN
back into the bar.)

BRACKETT

You seen 'em?

BRACE

No sir. I just came by and saw this man lying here.

BRACKETT

You don't look like you're the type to be haulin' around in this area.

BRACE

I have business here.

BRACKETT

Is she pretty?

(BRACE starts to leave.)

BRACKETT

Where you off to?

BRACE

I'm going home.

BRACKETT

Home? Where might that be?

(Grabbing hold of Brace' arm.)

You sure you didn't see what happened?

BRACE

You can let go of me now.

BRACKETT

I don't know why your down in this hole.

BRACE

I am a minister.

BRACKETT

A man of the cloth? You fishin' for some lovelies down here?

BRACE

I find homes for lost children.

BRACKETT

Well this is the place, isn't it? Why we got thousands of them. Couple of 'em just 'bout carved up a man here.

BRACE

I know.

OFFSTAGE VOICE

Brackett!

BRACKETT

Right here, Jeffers. Gather some of the boys we're gonna flush this area down tonight!

OFFSTAGE VOICE

Right!

(Police whistles are heard in the distance as well as the sound of billy clubs beating on brick pavement. It slowly builds in volume.)

BRACE

Well I must attend to my duties.

BRACKETT

It's a waste o' time preacher.

BRACE

Excuse me?

BRACKETT

What do you do when you find 'em? Wag your Christian finger at them. You swat there back-sides put a bible in there hands and send 'em back to their whorin' mothers and drunkin' fathers, is that what you do?

BRACE

We are trying to save them.

POLICEMAN

How about this, we take the whole stinkin' mess, the bog-jumpers, the garlic eaters and there entire brood and we pack and crate 'em and send 'em to the bottom of a river.

Brace

Good evening constable

(BRACE exits.)

BRACKETT

Listen preacher. There's some types you can't do nothing about. That poor sop should've shot 'em!

(Blows his whistle.)

Jeffers Come down my way! We'll flush em up Pearl street!

(He exits.)

(As the sounds of whistles and hammering nightsticks fill the air. A mother appears. She is frantic. She is holding the hand of a child and they are looking for some hiding place.)

KATIE

Momma where are we going?

SIOBHAN

We're takin' a detour Katie. We can't get back up to home tonight.

KATIE

What's that noise?

SIOBHAN

It's an army of devils, Katie.

KATIE

Oh.

SIOBHAN

They're hungry, lookin' to take somethin' back down with them.

KATIE

Something?

SIOBHAN

Someone.

(Beat.)

Don't worry Katie I've made sure God is watchin' on you.

KATIE

I hope he is watchin' you too.

SIOBHAN

He watches everyone. We'll hide in this alley and wait out them devils, trick 'em, then we can go home.

(SIOBHAN bends over in extreme pain. Her hand is on her lower stomach area.)

KATIE

Your always havin' the pain mamma. Why?

SIOBHAN

Why do you ask so many questions. What are you some question machine? Come here, lay by your mommy, I'll warm you a bit.

SIOBHAN

Here I was going to wait till we got home but I give you a treat now. Look, Bread.

SIOBHAN

(She pulls from her coat a small bread. KATIE is delighted.)

That's right we can sup on this now, how do you like that?

KATIE

I like it just fine.

(They eat he bread)

SIOBHAN

I couldn't believe my eyes. I was walkin' down a street lookin' to the sky. Mindin' my own self and I look in a window and I seen this bread just sittin' there. Sittin' in some shop lonely as the day is long.

KATIE

Lonely?

SIOBHAN

Aye. Well, I walk into the shop to tell that they have some lonely bread in the window. But they seen right through me so I say's to myself I can't stand to see this bread so lonely. So I took matters into me own hands and -

KATIE

(Stops eating.)

You stole it.

SIOBHAN

(A Long Pause. Caught.)

I stole Katie. God forgive me but I stole it.

(She winces in pain. KATIE shifts about to hold her mom. We hear voices from offstage.)

BRACKETT

Look on in here with me. Them rats is probably sleepin' nice down this alley

(SIOBHAN holds Katie tight to her. They scrunch as tight as possible into a corner. Two Policeman: Brackett and Jeffers enters. They are both carrying lanterns.)

BRACKETT

Gawd, I can't stand the smell of them crusty squaters. Can you smell that?

JEFFERS

I think we've done flushed this whole area.

BRACKETT

Gawd what are we doin' roundin' up this slime. Put them to the maker right off, I say.

JEFFERS

Your gonna shoot a kid?

BRACKETT

They're scrappers that live here. No sense keepin' them about.

VOICE OFFSTAGE

Hey Brackett, how be Pearl?

BRACKETT

Not much. Jeffers and Me we'll move over to Orange street.

OFFSTAGE VOICE

Right-o!

BRACKETT

I'm gettin' tired of the same business. The missions is packed. Got 'em stacked as high as cork-wood. Every asylum and orphanage I know is bustin' at the seems.

JEFFERS

Well I ain't got no answer for you I just want to finish crackin' heads and get the hell out of the cold.

(They exit.)

SIOBHAN

Are you cold sweet heart?

KATIE

A bit.

SIOBHAN

We'll be home too soon. I'll have bit of coal to warm us by.

KATIE

Why do we hide?

SIOBHAN

They're devils Katie. I'm tellin' ya and that's the truth. If they seen us here tonight. They'd crack a whip on me and they'd take you away and I'd never see you again.

KATIE

Is it because you stole?

SIOBHAN

No, Katie. It is because we are not wanted.

(Winces in pain again.)

KATIE

I'm worried for you mommie.

SIOBHAN

Let us eat our bread.

(Crossfade to where TIP, LUCKY and FRANK are hiding. TIP is laying down moaning holding his stomach. FRANK is sitting up he is holding a cloth to his bloody eye. LUCKY has a pipe in his mouth and holding a bottle of booze.)

TIP

Gawd I'm goin' to be sick all over meself.

LUCKY

You feelin' the blows hard frank?

FRANK

I'm a peach 'cept for my eyehole is throbbin like a machine.

TIP

You hear me? I'm achin' in my belly!

LUCKY

Shut your hole Tip! I gives ya food and ya moan like a girl.

TIP

But what ya gives me is like poison.

LUCKY

Tip your sick always. Have some hootch it'll knock ya low for a while.

FRANK

Don't hog it all Tip.

LUCKY

Ya wantin' a pipe Frank?

FRANK

(Alarmed)

Shhh!

(Everyone Freezes.)

TIP

Gawd is it someone?

(LUCKY immediately stands and commands the situation. He waves FRANK off. He stands with knife in hand. CHARLES BRACE appears from the darkness. LUCKY pounces upon BRACE and swings him about pinning him against a wall. With the knife against his throat.)

FRANK

I'll slice your crown right off -

FRANK

Kill 'em he's a cop!

BRACE

Stop. Stop!

TIP

Cut him Lucky and let's scoot!

BRACE

In Jesus name, please.

FRANK

Cut him Lucky.

LUCKY

Who are you?

BRACE

My name is Charles Brace. I work for the Children's Aid Society.

LUCKY

The Children's what?

FRANK

Slice the lyin' bugger, lucky. He's punkin' on you!

BRACE

I swear by God all mighty, I'm from the Children's Aid Society. I am a minister, I'm here to help you.

LUCKY

He's a padre from uptown.

FRANK

Slice him anyway.

LUCKY

(Dropping his knife.)

What are ya doin' here? How'd you find this hole?

BRACE

I followed you. I saw what happened to the gentleman out side the brewery.

TIP

Gentleman? The Piker was a snake.

LUCKY

He just had an unlucky day.

FRANK

This punk is a snitch Lucky. Let's roam.

BRACE

I wouldn't move about just now. The constables are out in force they're looking specifically for you.

TIP

Ah hell, I couldn't move about with my achin' lard.

BRACE

They'll find you eventually. I can help you.

LUCKY

(Thrusting knife back to braces throat.)

I don't need God spewin' sports like you tellin' me anything!

BRACE

I understand.

Lucky, I 'm real sick.

TIP

Shut it!

LUCKY

Like I gotta spike in my stomach.

TIP

Tip, You're stinkin' gadger.

LUCKY

TIP

(Starts to cry. Speaks almost in a whisper.)

I'm sick Lucky. It's like I'm breakin' up inside. I hurt bad.

LUCKY

You eat like a pig Tip, always have. Then your always shuckin' everythin' up. Gawd, your face is blazin' hot. Frank gimme that hootch.

(FRANK pour some Liquor into the cupped hands of LUCKY. Tip sips out of LUCKY'S hand like a wounded animal.)

BRACE

Let me take him. I can get him some help.

LUCKY

Tip ain't goin' nowheres.

BRACE

I can help.

LUCKY

I knows about your crew. Lyin' sots!

BRACE

He is ill.

LUCKY

He's always sick.

BRACE

He could be seriously ill.

LUCKY

(Tossing knife to Frank.)

Cut him Frank!

FRANK

What if the preachers right.

LUCKY

Cut him!

BRACE

He may be dying. I can help him. I can help you all. I can take you to warm quarters-

LUCKY

That's it! You're Dead!

(LUCKY pounces to BRACE and pins him to the wall hold the knife to BRACES' neck.)

BRACE

There's no point of living this way. There's a way out!

LUCKY

Liar! I know what happens, you lyin' sack! You round us up, toss us in some hole-

BRACE

That is not true-

LUCKY

You preach God and toss some maggot bread our way-

BRACE

That is not what we do-

LUCKY

Then ship us out to break coal till our hands is bloody stumps.

BRACE

What I do is different.

LUCKY

How many times have I heard that.

FRANK

I heard that too.

LUCKY

Y' see Frank hears the same damn thing. We heard it over and over from every God speakin' slacker.

TIP

Lucky?

LUCKY

Get out. Go find some other boys t' lie to. Just be thankin' me I didn't cut your throat.

TIP

Lucky?

BRACE

I'll pray for you.

LUCKY

Don't waste your breath.

(BRACE exits. FRANK is staring at LUCKY.)

LUCKY

What are you lookin' at?

FRANK

Nothin'.

LUCKY

What?

FRANK

Tip ain't doin' well. Maybe we coulda -

LUCKY

Don't say what yor gonna say. Do you wanna go back to the way it was? Yer drunkin father crackin' yor head with a club? Breakin' coal till y' crazy? Tip's fine he just pigged on somethin.' You're always piggin' on somethin' you shouldn't Tip.

TIP

(Barely audible)

I'm burning up.

LUCKY

I'll light you a pipe. We'll have some more hootch. Frank you keep guard make sure no sot comes down our plank here.

(Scene Crossfades to BRACE addressing the audience.)

BRACE

I pray to God to show his face in mine so that they may know I speak a different truth. A real truth. A constant truth of salvation and rebirth. I want them to see God in my eyes. But they cannot see past their own misery What is my next step? Dear God what is my next step?

(The scene crossfades to a rancid one room apartment. On the floor and leaning against a wall is a lady by the name of ANNIE. She is very drunk. Laying on her lap is one of her children, CIARA.)

CIARA

Momma I'm cold. I can't sleep I'm cold.

ANNIE

(Mimicking the Cirara)

Momma I'm cold. I'm so cold. Well I'm cold to, just so you know. Do you here me moanin' a storm about it?

ANNIE

(Pushes Ciara away.)

Camp yerself down and be quiet about it. Maggie will be home with a bit coal and some food.

CIARA

Momma I wanna lay on you. I'm cold.

ANNIE

Shut up Ciara. Go Lay down somewhere. Yer killin' my soul with yor achin' voice.

(She takes a swig from a bottle.)

Where in the blazes is tha' Maggie? Keepin' her late at work whiles I can get no food or heat.

(Takes another swig from the bottle.)

I'm by meself and I'm divin' about to no end. I can't keep food in you. I have t' send me Maggie to work for some capper uptown so's I can keep you eatin' somethin'. Gawd you bleedin' kiddlins y' took me life from me. I can hardly peek in a glass no more.

I used t' be a looker. Aye, I was somethin' the boys love t' chase for. Every man wantin' some of me... Did I tell you kiddlin's 'bout how your daddy met me. Oh he was a pretty lad. He kept on me till I broke and I layed into his big arms. He was a sweet talker. Oh Gawd he used t' make me shiver with his words. I was his sugar tart. That's what he would say, "Annie you is me sugar Tart." Gawd why am I rememberin' that? (Takes a long swig.) If'n he'd not died.

(A man appears in the doorway. He is carrying a bottle and appear slightly tipsy. His name is TOM.)

TOM

Annie girl.

ANNIE

Wha'? Who's there?

TOM

Who's there? Girlie, you don't even know yer own Tom?

ANNIE

Tom? Oh, Tommy-boy.

TOM

It's cold out Annie.

ANNIE

Aye that it is.

TOM

I'm thinkin' I want some sugar now Annie, t' chase the cold out of me.

ANNIE

Go on with yerself tommy, I got a kid here and I'm needin' a bit of rest.

TOM

(Grabs Annie Pulling her up to him.)

Let me take y' out into the hall and I'll have some sugar from you. Quick now.

ANNIE

Come back tomorrow Tommy I'll give you all y' want.

TOM

I'm wantin' now Annie.

(He goes and grabs hold of CIARA and drags her toward the door. She protests. ANNIE tries to rise and stop Tom. He pushes her back down. TOM throws CIARA out of the apartment. CIARA pounds on the door.)

ANNIE

Ciara go down to Iona's now!

CIARA

Mommie!

ANNIE

Go to it now!

(The pounding on the door stops.)

TOM

You drinkin' wench.

ANNIE

Don't talk like that Tommy.

TOMMY

(Hunching down by her. He grabs her hair and pulls her back up.)

You drinkin' stinkin' filthy wench.

ANNIE

Tommy You're hurtin' me.

TOMMY

Are you thievin me Annie?

ANNIE

I ain't thievin nothin'.

TOM

Well I pay to have you when I want you. An' this is the second night you ain't given me some.

ANNIE

I'm tired, it's cold.

TOM

Yer drunk and stupid Annie. My money feeds you an' the fat little girls of your's. I'm takin' my money t' another whore. You ain't worth spittin' on.

(He let's go an' starts to leave. ANNIE stumbles up reaching out for TOM.)

ANNIE

Come Tommy I'll lie for you. Come here an' touch me lad.

TOM

Let go of me you stink.

ANNIE

Tommy lad let me lie for you.

TOM

(He back hands her. She falls hard to the ground. She's unconscious)

I don't toss money for nothin' Y' hear me?

(Silence)

This Tommy boy's goin' t' find some elsewhere's, stinkin' whore.

(A girl appears in the doorway. She is ANNIE'S daughter, MAGGIE. She's carrying a small sack of food.)

MAGGIE

(Seeing ANNIE unconscious on the floor.)

Mommie?

(Dropping food races to ANNIE)

Mommie!

TOM

Well, what's this now?

MAGGIE

What happened? Mommie, wake up. Ciara? Ciara!

TOM

I think she might've had a fall. Looks like she's downed a bottle or two. I'm surprised she ain't fallin' out the window.

(MAGGIE takes her coat off and places it under ANNIE'S head for a pillow.)

MAGGIE

Where's my sister?

TOM

Can't say that I know.

MAGGIE

What are you doing here?

TOM

Haven't seen you dear mother in a while. Good thing I came when I did.

MAGGIE

Ciara!

TOM

(Picks up small bag of food.)

Well, what do we have here.

(He pulls out a loaf of bread and takes a big bite out of it.)

MAGGIE

That's for my family.

TOM

Really. You know, I don't remember you lookin' like you do. I thought you was always a fat little piggy girl. Must be the season. Lump about in coats don't do well for a woman's figure now does it?

(Silence.)

Does it?

(Silence.)

I asked a question girlie.

MAGGIE

I'm not sure of the question.

TOM

(Let's out a laugh.)

Did you hear what I just calls you?

(Silence.)

Did you?

(Silence.)

I called you girlie.

(He moves to above her.)

You ain't a girlie. What's Annie been up to. You ain't a girlie are you?

MAGGIE

Your not gonna be eatin' all our food now are you?

TOM

Your food. Is that what that is?

MAGGIE

Yes?

TOM

After all these months of bumpin' your mother I never did get your name.

(Silence.)

What's your name?

Maggie.

MAGGIE

Do you know who I am?

TOM

I don't-

MAGGIE

Thomas. I am Thomas and just so's you know this food here, I pays for.

TOM

I didn't know that. I just never seen you here.

MAGGIE

Your mother doesn't like bumpin' in front the kids. Bet you didn't know your mum was so respectable now.

TOM

I should go downstairs and get her some help.

MAGGIE

I think a little snooze will do her fine. The reason I pays for everything here is that I'm suppose t' get somethin' in return.

TOM

(He stares at her for a beat.)

Do you know what that somethin' is?

MAGGIE

No.

TOM

You ain't so piggy at all.

(Pulls out a bottle.)

Would you want t' share some spirits with me.

TOM (CONTD)

No.

MAGGIE

No? Well I hate t' drink alone but-

TOM

(Takes a swig.)

You must be frozen now.

MAGGIE

I'm fine.

TOM

No, no You have t' be like ice now.

MAGGIE

No.

TOM

(Tom grabs her and pulls her up to him.)

Let Tommy warm ya'.

MAGGIE

Please, I'm fine. Please.

(She struggles in his grip.)

TOM

What y' fightin' me for, I'm just offerin' t' warm you.

MAGGIE

Please let go of me.

TOM

I'd stop strugglin if'n I were you. Cause if y' don't, I'll snap your head off.

(She stops struggling.)

Good girl.

(Silence. He grabs her hair and pulls her head back. They are practically nose to nose.)

TOM (CONTD)

Are you good, girl?

MAGGIE

Please don't hurt me.

TOM

I didn't get my bit tonight.

MAGGIE

(Barley audible.)

Don't hurt me.

TOM

Gawd, yer feelin' warm t' Tommy here.

MAGGIE

Let me go. You can have the food.

TOM

Y' think it's food that I'm wantin'?

MAGGIE

Take the food.

TOM

Y' warmin' me up jus' fine.

(He starts groping her. She struggles to get away.)

Maggie

Stop! Please stop!

(He continues to grope her. Her fighting increases with intensity till she stamps on his foot. He let's out a yell She attempts to flee out the doorway. He stops her the doorway.)

TOM

You bleedin' turk. I'm gonna get my bit now!

(He pushes her down to the floor. She struggles and screams. Shadows of the struggle are seen on a wall. Crossfade to the LUCKY'S den. LUCKY is a sleep. FRANK is laying by Tip Staring at him. TIP is asleep but his breathing is hard and rattled. After a moment Frank crosses to LUCKY and wakes him.)

FRANK

Lucky, wake -up. Wake-up! I think Tip is dyin'. Wake-up!

LUCKY
What?

FRANK
Tip is dyin'.

LUCKY
What are you sayin'?

(Stumbles over to Tip.)
Tip, you lousy sot wake yourself up?

(TIP, still barely conscious, tries to respond to LUCKY. LUCKY shakes TIP.)

LUCKY
Wake yerself!

FRANK
He's been sick too long, Lucky. We gotta do somethin'.

LUCKY
Let me think.

FRANK
Gawd Tip you can't die.

LUCKY
Shut it! He ain't dyin'.

FRANK
What are you talkin' he ain't been hisself for a goodly time.

LUCKY
Let me think.

FRANK
He's always shuckin' his food after he eats-

LUCKY
Let me think!

FRANK
Been spittin' blood 'bout a month now.

LUCKY

Frank, just shut it! We'll take him into the mission up on Pearl street. They'll get after him.

FRANK

Shoulda let that Preacher man take him.

LUCKY

If you don't shut it –

FRANK

Stop tellin' me to shut it!

(TIP suddenly let's out a great moan. He doubles over with severe pain and goes into convulsions. He is gasping for air.)

FRANK

Tip!

(FRANK Shoves LUCKY to the side and grabs hold of TIP and tries to control the convulsions. Slowly TIP'S convulsions get less severe. He his gasping for air. Then finally TIP stops convulsing. Silence. He is dead. FRANK is in shock.)

FRANK

Tip? Tip? Oh gawd. Oh Gawd.

(FRANK begins to cry. LUCKY is in shock. A moment of silence passes.)

LUCKY

Let me think. Let me think... We can take him to the Mission and then the ladies will take him and... Let's see. The ladies over at the Mission they know 'bout sickness they can fix Tip up jus' right.

FRANK

What are you talkin'! Look at him he's dead! You stupid sacker, he's dead!

LUCK

I gotta think here.

FRANK

That's real good Lucky, you thinkin', that's real good.

LUCKY

We bring him there an' ring the bell then once they's at the door we shoot out leavin' Tip

FRANK

(Crosses quickly to LUCKY grabs him by the collar.)

He's dead you stupid bastard! You let him die.

LUCKY

You talk that way again and I'll cut you –

FRANK

(Reveals knife)

Too late for that. How' bout I cut you. I'm sick of you Lucky. You gonna have me die next? I outta cut your lungs out. I'm sick of this. Look at Tip dyin' in this hole. This ain't the way it's suppose to be... I ain't stayin' here no more. No more. I ain't dyin' like Tip.

(FRANK races out. After a moment LUCKY crosses to TIP and sits by him. He puts his hand on TIPS head and gently caresses him. LUCKY starts to cry.

Crossfade to Katie and her mom. The mother wakes from her sleep. Looks around. Listens for some clues.)

SIOBHAN

Katie, wake. They moved on. Katie, wake yourself so's we can make a go for home.

(KATIE wakes with a yawn.)

KATIE

I'm so cold.

SIOBHAN

The devils is passed let's move ourselves.

KATIE

I'm tired Momma.

SIOBHAN

I know sweetheart, but we'll freeze to death if we stay out here. Come now I'll carry you a ways.

(SIOBHAN picks up KATIE and they begin to sneak through the streets. SIOBHAN is suddenly seized by a great pain in her lower abdomen. She puts KATIE down and falls to all fours.)

KATIE

Momma, you alright? Momma?

SIOBHAN

Yes, Katie. Just let me get some air.

(BRACKETT appears.)

BRACKETT

What's this?

(KATIE and SIOBHAN are startled.)

What's this? You drun'kin' sot!

KATIE

My Momma is sick.

BRACKETT

I can see that alright.

SIOBHAN

We better go Katie.

BRACKETT

(Blocking her path. Revealing a night stick.)

You outta be ashamed of yourself, Stinkin' drunk. I got a mind t' knock you off.

SIOBHAN

We is makin' our way home sir.

BRACKETT

Drinkin' an' whorin' with your kid.

What he's sayin' Momma?

KATIE

BRACKETT

(Calling off)

Jeffers, I got a donkey here!

SIOBHAN

If you'll pardon us—

BRACKETT

You ain't going nowhere.

(BRACKETT takes a step back.)

Gawd you smell like a dead animal.

SIOBHAN

(Whispering to KATIE.)

You make a run for home when I tell you.

(SIOBHAN turns toward BRACKETT and slumps on him, her arms wrapped around him and turns him away from KATIE.)

BRACKETT

Get off me you stinkin' wench!

SIOBHAN

Go Katie! Go! Run!

(KATIE Runs away.)

BRACKETT

Hey!

(SIOBHAN breaks away temporarily from BRACKETT. He reaches out and clubs SIOBHAN sending her to the ground.)

You stinkin' whore. Gawd you smell.

JEFFERS enters and he is holding KATIE in a tight grip. She is fighting him)

Look at this little mick.

JEFFERS

Momma!

KATIE

Shut yer face!

BRACKETT

(KATIE manages to bite the hand of JEFFERS' and attempts to run away but JEFFERS swings his club and knocks Katie to the ground. She is motionless. Echoing sounds of many nightsticks pounding on paved surfaces are heard in the background over the next scene.)

BRACKETT

You take the little Mick to the asylum. I'll drag the whorin' donkey to the precinct to dry out.

(Both policeman drag KATIE and SIOBHAN off in opposite directions.)

(Crossfade to the streets of Four Points. FRANK is running dashing about hiding in corners. He is emotionally distraught.)

FRANK

I ain't gonna die. Not in this place. I gettin' away, far away. I ain't gonna Die!

(A POLICEMAN enters and lands his club to FRANKS head. FRANK collapses to the ground.)

(Crossfade to a POLICEMAN Crashing into LUCKY'S den.)

POLICEMAN

Alright you thieves on your feet!

POLICEMAN

(LUCKY stares mindlessly.)

I said t' your feet!

(POLICEMAN grabs LUCKY pulls him up.)

You to!

(He nudges TIP with his foot. No response.)

I said you to!

POLICEMAN

(Pokes him with a nightstick.)

Get yourself up!

(No Response. The POLICEMAN turns over TIP and is repelled by the smell and sight.)

Oh gawd.

(Grabbing LUCKY by the neck.)

You killed him? Did you?

LUCKY

Let me think, Tip. Let me think. You always eatin' bad-

POLICEMAN

Your friend here is rotter. Get going.

(As he exits)

He Joe, get a wagon I got a rotter here!

(Crossfade to MAGGIE, in the streets of Four Points. She is dazed and walking erratically. She has no coat or hat, her clothes are disheveled. She has a bruise on her face and a bloody lip. After a moment she slumps to the ground. Staring into space tears flood her eyes and she lets forth a mournful cry. She sobs uncontrollably. Another POLICEMAN appears.)

POLICEMAN

Okay, lets have it up you rat, your coming with me. Don't fight me or I'll club your head off.

(He reaches for MAGGIE, she scrambles away . She shows a fierce intensity.)

MAGGIE

Don't touch me!

POLICEMAN

Let's go, you rat, get on with it!

(He reaches toward MAGGIE. She stands and attempts to run. He blocks her path. The sound of police whistles and billy clubs beating on a brick pavement slowly builds in intensity.)

MAGGIE

Please don't touch me! Please! I don't wanna do nothin'! Don't touch me.

POLICEMAN

Shut up! I ain't got time for this let's go.

(He reaches for and gets her in hold as she wrestles violently with him.)

MAGGIE

No, I don't wanna do nothin' Please stop! Momma! Momma! Don't touch me!

(At this point there is a choreographed moment of kids running about and Policemen swinging clubs and giving chase. Repeated phrases like, "Momma" "Don't Touch me" "We got a rotter" "I ain't dyin" are heard along with kids screaming in fear. These sounds are layered with the whistles and billy clubs This moment that builds to a climax. Then black out. Silence. Crossfade to Brace sitting in his office. After a long moment Braces' secretary, Mrs Addams enters.)

MRS. ADDAMS

Reverend, your appointment has arrived.

(No response.)

Reverend, did you hear me. Your appointment has arrived.

BRACE

I wonder if I should cancel her for today.

MRS. ADDAMS

She's come a long way.

Right.

BRACE

(Pause)

MRS. ADDAMS

What is wrong?

BRACE

I just had a bad night last night..

MRS. ADDAMS

In what way?

BRACE

A man stabbed nearly to death by some children... I found them and they nearly killed me.

MRS. ADDAMS

You shouldn't be in that area alone.

BRACE

The authorities marched onto the streets and it was chaos. Children crawling out from every nook and cranny running for their lives. I could only stand and watch.

MRS. ADDAMS

What could you have possibly done?

BRACE

Precisely nothing and it's shameful.

MRS. ADDAMS

You are one person-

BRACE

There are thousands out of reach. One step forward two steps back it seems, Mrs. Addams

MRS. ADDAMS

If I may, The Children's Aid Society is doing noble work. The lodging house you opened is a miracle. You can look at all those boys and see that their lives have changed.

BRACE

Our rate of recidivism is deplorable and there are so many that we have yet to reach.

MRS. ADDAMS

One can only do so much. You should resign yourself to the fact that many children will not be reached.

BRACE

I should resign myself, Mrs. Addams?

MRS. ADDAMS

For some, maybe goodness is out of reach.

BRACE

I refuse to believe that.

MRS. ADDAMS

There are those who lack the capacity to comprehend God's Grace. Certainly you understand that.

BRACE

But what does that mean? There's no science to that. It's not that there are children walking around with 'God's Grace' stamped on their heads. Therefore we don't know and even if we were to know who could be saved is it right to turn a blind eye to those who may not have the capability of being saved? Who are we to judge?

MRS. ADDAMS

The truth of the matter is that in this environment we will not even come close to saving every child in distress.

BRACE

I understand. I don't mean to be curt but we can't just accept this menace. These are children and we must find something or put something in place to take them away from the squalor. Not just a few of them we need to aim higher.

(BRACE'S appointment MS. ELLA JAMES appears.)

JAMES

Excuse me, I didn't mean to barge but I wasn't sure if I was forgotten.

BRACE

Yes you have. I apologize, my secretary and I were engaged in a conversation-

JAMES

I didn't mean to interrupt. I can wait-

BRACE

No that is fine.

MRS. ADDAMS

May I introduce Ms. Ella James of Chicago Illinois. The Reverend Charles loring Brace.

BRACE

(Extends his hand for a formal greeting.)

Ms. James it's pleasure.

JAMES

It's an honor Reverend. I've read much about you and your organization.

BRACE

Would you like a cup of tea Ms. James?

JAMES

Yes. That would be lovely.

BRACE

A tea for Ms. James and myself.

MRS. ADDAMS

Straight away.

(The MRS. ADDAMS exits. There is an awkward pause.)

BRACE

Forgive me. Would you like a seat?

(They both sit. Another awkward pause.)

JAMES

I am sorry, if this is a bad time I certainly can schedule another-

BRACE

No, please. No. You just have caught me in a moment of frustration or self-pity. I'm not sure which.

JAMES

Self-pity?

BRACE

It is hard to explain. So you want to work for the society?

JAMES

Yes, that is correct.

BRACE

In what capacity? As a matron of the lodging.

JAMES

Certainly not. I am much more qualified.

BRACE

I see.

JAMES

I am here to help place children. I want to do what you do. I wish to go into the slums and rescue children.

BRACE

You do.

JAMES

Yes.

BRACE

What qualifies you for such work?

JAMES

I was a teacher for the Cook county Almshouse as well as the Cook county Poor Farm.

BRACE

A teacher.

JAMES

More than a teacher, I should say. Those places I worked were quite dangerous, Reverend. I protected the children, nurtured and educated them.

BRACE

So why not continue your good work in Chicago?

JAMES

It was difficult to do any sort of work, honestly. I was being compromised every step of the turn.

BRACE

So, you quit?

JAMES

I don't quit, Reverend. My supervisors lacked a focus, I thought and-

BRACE

They asked you to leave?

JAMES

(Pause)

I was asked to vacate my position, yes, but not for reasons one could assume. I was very good at what I felt was my real mission.

BRACE

What was that mission, Ms. James?

JAMES

To give the children a second chance at life. But more and more the children were spending less time under my care and more time out in the fields working.

BRACE

They were learning a skill.

JAMES

They were learning nothing. Digging up carrots for someone else is not a skill it's slavery.

BRACE

I certainly do not know enough of your particular situation-

JAMES

In my particular situation, Reverend, the powers-that-be were lining their pockets with money at the expense of the children. I could see the exhaustion in their faces. After a while I just simply refused to let them out into the fields when they were ordered.

BRACE

I could see how that might cause some consternation.

JAMES

They complained often that the children continued to be recalcitrant and no amount of my work was helping. I made it known that I felt that the poor farms and almshouses were merely holding pens for the poor.

It was the environment in which they were living that was preventing these children from progressing. What had started as good work for the needy had become morally corrupt.

(MRS. ADDAMS enters with a tea service.)

MRS. ADDAMS

Has the Reverend spoke of his dilemma?

BRACE

Please.

JAMES

Dilemma?

BRACE

Thank you for the tea you may go now.

MRS. ADDAMS

He is not doing good work.

JAMES

Pardon me.

MRS. ADDAMS

Apparently, he is not doing enough.

BRACE

I would like to finish my discussion with Ms. James

MRS. ADDAMS

I hope in that discussion you say what good you have done.

JAMES

From all I read the Children's Aid Society is doing profound work.

BRACE

I am not disputing that. We need to find a way to do more. Why is that so hard to understand.

MRS. ADDAMS

I tell him one can do only so much.

JAMES

But one cannot be satisfied with that.

BRACE

Exactly.

JAMES

The children are our future. Therefore we have an solemn obligation to secure that future.

BRACE

Yes, exactly.

MRS. ADDAMS

I can't disagree with that. But the work that has been done should not be discounted in anyway.

BRACE

I am agreeing with you-

MRS. ADDAMS

But until such time that you scour every street and tenement picking up children and sending them someplace else because, as you said, 'it is the conditions,' you do what you can.

(Pause. BRACE is in deep thought.)

JAMES

Are you alright, Reverend?

BRACE

It is the conditions.

JAMES

Regarding what?

BRACE

You said, Ms. James, that the 'environment was preventing the children from progressing.'

JAMES

Yes.

BRACE

I have believed that for quite some time. The sin is in the place not the child. But I was thinking how do we change the environment here. But that may not be the answer.

JAMES

I'm not following.

BRACE

Mrs. Addams you, most respectfully, are wrong, these children can be removed and why not. Remove them out of the place that is causing them harm.

JAMES

What are you saying?

BRACE

Ms. James I would like you to come and work for me.

MRS. ADDAMS

Exactly what are you thinking, Reverend Brace?

BRACE

By the grace of God I will find some means to move these children away from hopelessness and despair and on to freedom, mercy, and salvation. Mrs. Addams please take care that Ms. James finds suitable housing. Ms. James you will report here tomorrow at eight in the morning I shall see you then.

(BRACE starts to exit)

MRS. ADDAMS

If I may inquire Reverend, Where are you off to?

BRACE

I am off to solve my dilemma. Thank you both for restoring hope within me after all.

JAMES

What shall we be doing tomorrow, Reverend Brace.

BRACE

God's work Ms. James.

(Crossfade to a medical ward. SIOBHAN is lying on a cot sleeping. An hourly church bell is heard in the distance. Siobhan wakes. She sits up she is confused. She tries to rise from her cot but barely gets a step forward but dizziness forces her to sit back down. A lady enters Her name is DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL.)

DR. BLACKWELL

Who gave you permission to get out of bed?

Where am I?
SIOBHAN

You're not fit to be out and about.
DR. BLACKWELL

Who are you?
SIOBHAN

I am the doctor here.
DR. BLACKWELL

What?
SIOBHAN

You're in hospital.
DR. BLACKWELL

I don't remember comin' to no hospital.
SIOBHAN

You were brought here.
DR. BLACKWELL

When?
SIOBHAN

It's been over a week now.
DR. BLACKWELL

Oh, my God.
SIOBHAN

You've been in and out of consciousness all week.
DR. BLACKWELL

Oh my God, Katie. Where's my katie? Is she here?
SIOBHAN

Who?
DR. BLACKWELL

My baby girl. Is she here?
SIOBHAN

DR. BLACKWELL

I don't about that. You were alone when you were brought here.

SIOBHAN

I have to go and find my Katie.

DR. BLACKWELL

Not in the shape you are in.

SIOBHAN

My Katie is out there alone.

(SIOBHAN tries to rise out of the bed but is struck by severe abdominal pain.)

DR. BLACKWELL

You are very sick.

SIOBHAN

I need to find me girl!

DR. BLACKWELL

Alright. We can help you with that but I am going need some information.

SIOBHAN

You help me with Katie?

DR. BLACKWELL

I will. But I can't do anything unless I know something about you. Tell me your name.

SIOBHAN

Siobhan Molony.

DR. BLACKWELL

Is Katie your only daughter?

SIOBHAN

No. Well, yes. Had four others but they're gone.

DR. BLACKWELL

Gone?

SIOBHAN

They passed

DR. BLACKWELL

I'm sorry.

DR. BLACKWELL

If I may, what did the others die of?

SIOBHAN

Mostly of the fever.

DR. BLACKWELL

Where's your husband?

SIOBHAN

Don't know.

DR. BLACKWELL

What do you mean?

SIOBHAN

I Don't know. He left. Left before being my actual husband. What is this place?

DR. BLACKWELL

This is the Dispensary for Poor woman and Children.

SIOBHAN

Where's that?

DR. BLACKWELL

We are on 7th street near the river.

SIOBHAN

How is it that I come to this place?

DR. BLACKWELL

Policeman brought you here. They didn't know what to do. Your where bleeding pretty badly. Why would the police want to apprehend you?

SIOBHAN

It's just what they do. I was trying to make it back to me place from my work.

DR. BLACKWELL

And you had you child with you?

SIOBHAN

No other choice ma'am.

DR. BLACKWELL

And you were on your way home?

SIOBHAN

Why you askin' such questions? You tell me you never heard stories of the coppers messin' with our kind.

DR. BLACKWELL

Yes, but-

SIOBHAN

Then you know. I was makin' my way up town not too far from this place here. I can't remember much other than them tearin' Katie from me grip.

DR. BLACKWELL

We will find your child.

SIOBHAN

I can't lose her. She's my only one.

DR. BLACKWELL

(Sits on the bed beside SIOBHAN)

I'd like to talk about you now.

SIOBHAN

I don't know if I can hear or say anything I'm just all mixed about right now.

DR. BLACKWELL

I can only imagine but this is important. You were brought here because the morning after your arrest you were unconscious and your skirt was soaked in blood.

(Pause.)

Have you been experiencing any pelvic pain.

SIOBHAN

I don't know.

DR. BLACKWELL

Here.

(DR. BLACKWELL demonstrates on herself)

Pain in this area.

SIOBHAN

Yes. But it seems I've always been havin' pain there what between babies and everyday livin'.

DR. BLACKWELL

Has the pain become worse?

SIOBHAN

Yes.

DR. BLACKWELL

When did the pain start to get worse for you?

SIOBHAN

The summer.

DR. BLACKWELL

This past

SIOBHAN

Aye.

DR. BLACKWELL

That's over six months.

(Pause. DR. BLACKWELL stares at SIOBHAN.)

Your skirt was bloodied because you are bleeding from your vagina.

SIOBHAN

Are you trying to embarrass me?

DR. BLACKWELL

You never notice your bleeding.

SIOBHAN

I thought it was me curse that was plaguing me.

DR. BLACKWELL

The bleeding is not normal.

SIOBHAN

Maybe it is.

DR. BLACKWELL

No, it is not. Siobhan, you are very sick.

SIOBHAN

What are you talkin'?

DR. BLACKWELL

You have been in and out of consciousness for nearly a week due to extreme anemia and sepsis. I examined you...You have uterine cervical carcinoma and it is advanced. Your womb, all along the sides of it are tumors and it appears that the tumors have invaded the mucosa of the bladder and rectum.

SIOBHAN

What does that all mean?

DR. BLACKWELL

It means that are most likely going die.

SIOBHAN

What?

DR. BLACKWELL

You are dying.

SIOBHAN

(Long pause.)

I think I need to go.

DR. BLACKWELL

We will try to make you as comfortable as possible.

SIOBHAN

I'm goin' to find my Katie. Let me up please.

(DR. BLACKWELL stands.)

DR. BLACKWELL

Where are you going back out to the streets?

SIOBHAN

(Starts to remove her robe.)

Where are me clothes.

DR. BLACKWELL

We had to burn them.

SIOBHAN

Burn them?

DR. BLACKWELL

They were covered with contagion and lice.

(SIOBHAN doubles over in pain. DR. BLACKWELL helps her back to the bed. SIOBHAN breaks down in tears.)

SIOBHAN

Why is this happening!

DR. BLACKWELL

Your disease is in its late stages. There are certain things we cannot fix.

SIOBHAN

I'm gonna die without me Katie. She'll never know what happened with her mother?

DR. BLACKWELL

We will find her.

SIOBHAN

What, you gonna be howlin her name in the streets? Wait till she comes runnin'?

DR. BLACKWELL

I know of a man, he helps poor street children. He has the capacity to find your Katie.

(Pause.)

DR. BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

Did you hear what I said?

SIOBHAN

Yes, and thank you... There's no fixin' me?

DR. BLACKWELL

No, I 'm sorry.

SIOBHAN

God's punishing me, eh?

DR. BLACKWELL

No, Siobhan.

(DR. BLACKWELL hugs SIOBHAN.)

SIOBHAN

I never felt so helpless... Please find me Katie.

(Crossfade to a children's orphan asylum. It is stark. Dirty. Children lay about. Motionless. CHARLES BRACE enters along with MS. ELLA JAMES. There is another lady present and she is a MATRON in the asylum. All three are in mid-conversation.)

MATRON

The children are locked up in here. That's for their own safekeeping. Boys and girls separated of course. Bathing occurs once a month downstairs. We keep boys till they are 18 years of age. They can be for the most part a good labor pool. Helps pay the expense here. The girls we release once they reach the age of 14.

BRACE

Why?

MATRON

That's a good age for marriage. Most of them not much on work at that age might as well find a husband. Anyway, that's how we work here. Now, it says here, that you're taking the children here without parents or missing parents and you are going to relocate them.

BRACE

Yes that's correct.

MATRON

Where?

BRACE

Where?

MATRON

Yes, Where?

BRACE

I thought it had been explained to you.

MATRON

I'm not always privy to the in's and out's of this building. My job is to make sure these children do not get out of control.

JAMES

We are going to find families for these children. We are going to take these children away from here so that they can have the opportunity to begin again.

MATRON

What do you mean, 'begin again.'

JAMES

Just that. An opportunity to restart their lives.

MATRON

You must be joking.

BRACE

Why would we joke about that.

MATRON

Honestly, what family would take any of them?

BRACE

A family who believes in the Grace of God.

MATRON

I know these children. I am here everyday and I tell you they have no capacity what so ever to "begin again. " What are you promising them? The moon?

BRACE

"Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" James, chapter 2 verse 17. My faith leads me to believe that salvation is possible. My faith leads me to find some help for the helpless.

MATRON

I have seen you reformers come and go and they are still here.

BRACE

I don't know how we have come to this point of our conversation-

MATRON

I have seen this so many times before.

JAMES

We are not hear argue-

MATRON

Despite your efforts these creatures keep returning-

JAMES

May we move on to the task at hand?

MATRON

They keep returning and they keep arriving. It never ends because it cannot end. It's how they were born.

BRACE

I see no point in talking with you. I can see none. You have the appropriate papers our carriages are waiting. If we can have the children gather outside we will transport them now.

MATRON

Children! Stand!

(Children rise)

MATRON (CONT'D)

Line up proper like. Don't misbehave. I want an orderly line as we pass outside. No shoving or talking or get the crop. Is that understood. Very well let's proceed.

BRACE

See that they enter the carriages with out incident. Let's make this as swift as possible. Oh and make sure she doesn't use the crop. These children can ill afford any more scares.

JAMES

Yes sir.

(The children file out. Along with the MATRON and MS. JAMES. One child remains behind she still sitting on the ground. She is rocking back and forth staring out into space. It is MAGGIE. CHARLES crosses to her.)

BRACE

Excuse me child but you must come now.

(Silence. CHARLES kneels beside her.)

Child do you hear me we are going now.

(Silence. CHARLES reaches out to touch her and she reacts immediately and violently; slapping his arm away and crawling away.)

MAGGIE

Don't touch me! Stop it! Don't you come near me!

BRACE

I will stand where I am.

MAGGIE

I don't want to do nothin'.

BRACE

Of course.

MAGGIE

I ain't going. Please, I don't want to. I don't want to.

BRACE

I'm just wanting to take you out of this place.

MAGGIE

Your going to do something.

BRACE

My Name is Charles Brace. I am a minister and I am here to help you.

MAGGIE

No! I know what you want!

BRACE

I would like it if you were to accept my offer to help. I shall stand over here, the door is open, I will not touch you. I shall give orders that no one touch you. So if you could stand and walk downstairs to the carriages-

MAGGIE

Stop! Stop talking!

BRACE

If I leave out this door without you that will be it.

MAGGIE

I am not going!

BRACE

We will never have this opportunity again

MAGGIE

I know what you want!

What ever hurt you-

MAGGIE

Leave me alone!

BRACE

What ever evil touched you will do it again.
It will never stop.

MAGGIE

Stop! Leave me alone!

(MS. JAMES ENTERS. There is a moment of
silence.)

JAMES

Reverend the children are set the carriages we are ready to leave.

BRACE

Please come with me.

(Silence.)

JAMES

They shall be locking the asylum now, we need to go.

BRACE

May God be with you child.

(They exit. After a beat. She stand and runs
over to where they exited.)

MAGGIE

I just don't want to be hurt!

(After a moment CHARLES BRACE reappears
along with the MATRON.)

BRACE

Dear child, If you stay here all there will be is hurt.

(MAGGIE collapses to the floor crying.)

MATRON

Who would ever want her.

(Crossfade to The Dispensary for Poor Women
and Children. SIOBHAN is in her bed. A tiny
bed is next to her's on that bed is a suitcase)

DR. BLACKWELL

The nurses chipped in and bought her the prettiest of dresses, hat and gloves. She has one on now and she looks adorable.

SIOBHAN

I cannot wait to see.

DR. BLACKWELL

She's downstairs with the nurses and they are doting all over her.

SIOBHAN

I loved her being with me. To have such peace for the past weeks is a miracle. Thank you.

DR. BLACKWELL

It was also a miracle that we found her.

SIOBHAN

Aye.

DR. BLACKWELL

She is a sweet darling girl... Has she said anything?

(Pause)

SIOBHAN

About?

DR. BLACKWELL

Your condition.

SIOBHAN

She has been curious-

(Pause)

DR. BLACKWELL

You have really made this a difficult situation.

SIOBHAN

Believe me I tried.

DR. BLACKWELL

Your refusal these past weeks to discuss this with her is beyond me

SIOBHAN

I tried-

DR. BLACKWELL

She is leaving today and you're getting worse by the day.

SIOBHAN

I can feel that.

DR. BLACKWELL

Your pain is eventually going overwhelm the morphine.

(Pause. They look at each other. Siobhan touches the Doctor's face.)

SIOBHAN

I tried, believe me when I tell you, I tried. I can't seem to find the words in me head. How do you tell a child her mum is dyin'. I tried always to give her hope teachin' her that there's always somethin' to look forward to.

DR. BLACKWELL

I understand. But to wait till the last moment.

SIOBHAN

I tried.

DR. BLACKWELL

I don't know your daughter that well but if when you tell her now about your circumstance and the decisions we have made for her future, I can't imagine she would leave your side.

SIOBHAN

I 'm doin' everything wrong. I get so scared.

DR. BLACKWELL

Reverend Brace say's she is placed out to a good farm family. This is a brilliant opportunity to save your child... You need to talk now. I'll bring her up so you can talk.

SIOBHAN

Aye.

DR. BLACKWELL

The train she is scheduled for will be departing in about two hours. I said I would deliver her personally to the Reverend.

SIOBHAN

Let me gather myself a bit.

DR. BLACKWELL

I'll bring her up. You must tell her she has no choice but to be placed.

SIOBHAN

Aye, I will at that. Doctor Blackwell I may need bit more medicine. That might help.

(Crossfade to the lodgings of Children's Aid Society. Children run on completing dressing, putting on shoes buttoning coats etc. MS. JAMES enters she is dressed for travel she is followed by the MRS. ADDAMS)

MRS. ADDAMS

Children, children settle down. Please finish your dressing. The Reverend will be here soon to see you off on the train. Hurry now, we are on a schedule.

JAMES

I am a little disappointed, not many of the children are spoken for.

MRS. ADDAMS

Many of the little ones are. I worry for the older ones. We can only pray that somewhere along the route they'll be taken. We shall wire you if the situation changes for any of them.

(Crossfade to a room where the kids are preparing. LUCKY is sitting on the ground reading a book. FRANK, seeing him, walks across the room and sits near him.)

FRANK

(After a moment.)

You lookin' like you got stuffed into that suit.

LUCKY

Frank.

(LUCKY stands quickly shoves the book in his pants and starts to leave.)

FRANK

The preacher man got to you too, huh?

LUCKY

Like we gotta choice.

FRANK

You going out to live with some wood eaters. Never in a million years would I thought that. Tip dead 'n all I thought maybe you'd be knockin' another gang together.

LUCKY

If you ever say Tips' name again I'll kill you. I will kill you Frank. I gotta ride on this train with you but I don't want talk with you or be near you or nothin'. Do you hear me? You stay away from me.

(LUCKY exits the scene.)

FRANK

You don't have to talk with me. I don't give a squat. Your nothin' Lucky. Piece of garbage.

(MS. JAMES and MRS. ADDAMS enter. both of them are carrying a stack of bibles. They are followed by CHARLES BRACE.)

JAMES

Very good children can we assemble please. Into a disciplined line please. Gather up now.

(Children form a line across the stage.
CHARLES BRACE speaks while the ladies hand out bibles to the children.)

BRACE.

It is a good day today children. You are about to begin again. You have a future before you now. God has blessed you all with an extraordinary opportunity. At the end of your journey you will be met by loving families. Good Christians who have opened their hearts and homes to take you in, treat you as their own. Offer you food, clothing and God's love. In a matter of weeks all of your pain and suffering shall be but a distant memory. Please bow your heads. Compassionate and resurrected Christ, when you lived this earthly life, you took children in your arms and blessed them. You are alive and present in all of us...

(Crossfades to SIOBHAN and KATIE in the hospital room. KATIE is dressed in a coat and hat. Siobhan is in a slight morphine haze.)

SIOBHAN

If you are not an angel I don't know what one is.

KATIE

Where are we going mommy?

SIOBHAN

Well that's a good question.

KATIE

Your still in bed?

SIOBHAN

I tell you, young lady, I can't put anything by you. The truth is that you're going someplace.

KATIE

Me?

SIOBHAN

Aye, someplace special.

KATIE

But you're going with me, aren't you?

SIOBHAN

Well darlin' -

KATIE

Why is that case on my bed?

SIOBHAN

Why that case is filled with beautiful new clothes.

KATIE

What's going on?

SIOBHAN

Tis a hard thing Katie.

KATIE

(Hugs SIOBHAN.)

I'm not going any where without you. I can't live without you.

SIOBHAN

Katie.

KATIE

I'm not going anywhere without you. You need me mommy.

SIOBHAN

I know darlin', tis true. But let mommy talk.

KATIE

I love you mommy. You need me.

SIOBHAN

Katie, let me talk to you alright?

(Stares at KATIE for a moment.)

KATIE

Yes?

SIOBHAN

You know I think you got me eyes. Yes I believe you do.

KATIE

I look like you?

SIOBHAN

But where'd you get that nose?

KATIE

You don't like my nose?

SIOBHAN

Well, I imagine it does its job but it's a pointy sharp one it is

KATIE

I like my nose.

SIOBHAN

I'm sure you do.

KATIE

What about my ears.

SIOBHAN

What about em?

KATIE

Do you like them?

SIOBHAN

Oh, Katie I love everything about you.

(She is overcome with emotion. She grabs
KATIE and holds on for dear life.)

I love every thing about you... But you have to go now.

KATIE

What do you mean?

SIOBHAN

We got a new home Katie we do.

KATIE

We do?

SIOBHAN

Yes its got a big room for a eatin' table and a room to sleep in an' all kinds of heat we'll never be cold again.

KATIE

Are we goin' now to it?

SIOBHAN

Well, I am an' you're going t' come to it later on. That's why you got your bag.

KATIE

So, what am I going to do now?

SIOBHAN

Well Dr. Blackwell is bringin' you to a train station for you to take a nice trip about the city. You've never done that before right?

KATIE

But what about you?

SIOBHAN

Well, why your are havin' fun. I'll be travelin' to the new place. Now lets get you set for your ride. An' you hang on to your case so's we can unpack it our new home right?

KATIE

I'm scared mommy.

SIOBHAN

Ah, nothin' t' be scared of. You get a ride on a train, fresh air and you get to meet some kiddlins your own age. An' mommy will be in a new place when you're done.

DR. BLACKWELL

(Entering.)

We should be on our way if we are to make it on time.

SIOBHAN

Katie, gather yourself up.

KATIE

You promise, right?

SIOBHAN

Promise what?

KATIE

That I'll be with you after the train ride.

(SIOBHAN looks at DR. BLACKWELL who appears to be very disappointed)

SIOBHAN

(Hugs her tightly.)

I'll be with you. You be a good Katie an' enjoy your ride. Here Doctor if you can take her now.

(Dr. Blackwell Takes Katie by the hand and starts to exit.)

Please know Katie that I love everything about you. Now go with the nice Doctor.

KATIE

I love you mommy. You'll get me as soon as I'm done?

SIOBHAN

Pay attention to the nice ladies.

(KATIE and DR. BLACKWELL exit. SIOBHAN starts to cry. Crossfade to a train passenger car.. A voice over is heard "All aboard." Emotive music underscores the scene and builds to a climax.)

JAMES

Move to your assigned seats. Get comfortable this will be a long journey. You will not misbehave or act out in any fashion. Talking should be kept at a minimum and with low voices. You will not leave your seats without permission. You have Bible I suggest that now is the time to read it. It will provide you with sufficient answers to any and all questions. And by all means remember who you are and how you got here. Don't forget. In just a few days it will be as if you've become a whole new person.

(One by one each orphan stands and addresses the audience.)

ORPHAN 1

My parents disappeared and left me. I'm an orphan train rider.

ORPHAN 2

My parents didn't want me no more. I'm an Orphan train rider.

ORPHAN 3

My parents got too sick to take care of me. I'm an orphan train rider.

LUCKY

I'm Louis Rosenberg, they call me lucky. I'm 14 years old, I think. They call me lucky cause I ain't never been caught by no copper and 'cause I always seem to get what I want. I don't know nothin' 'bout my folks. An' I don't care.

ORPHAN 4

As long as I remember I ain't got no parents. I'm an orphan train rider.

ORPHAN 5

My mother died and my father left. I'm an orphan train rider.

FRANK

My real name is Frank J Snyder. I don't know my age. My dad ran a dive called Mulligans till he got shot in the chest and died. My mom whore'd 'bout till she died. I don't want to remember a damn thing. I am startin' over. I am gonna be happy.

ORPHAN 6

I want new parents cause the one's I had didn't want me. I'm an orphan train rider.

ORPHAN 7

I'm scared. I've alway's been scared. I had no parents to take the scared away. I'm an orphan train rider.

KATIE

My name is Katie Molony. I'm waiting for my mommy. She said she'll be here. I don't know 'bout my age.

ORPHAN 8

I never had a mommie. Don't know what to do when I get one. I'm a orphan train rider.

MAGGIE

I'm Maggie Connolly. I'm 13 years old. I don't want to hurt no more. I just want t' be safe. For once I want t' be safe.

(Music builds. Fade to black.)

End of Act I