

OLIVER T!

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Dickens' classic tale is updated and moved to the United States in 1955. Oliver is purchased from the orphanage by the oppressive MacDonald family. He sees the family he always dreamed of on the *We Love the Brewsters* television show and runs away to Hollywood hoping to join them. Instead, he meets up with Bill Sikes and his band of pickpockets who prowl the Hollywood streets. Oliver has the good fortune to try to pick the pocket of Billy Bigelow, who produces the Brewster show, and Oliver manages to land a spot in the perfect television family. Bill Sikes sees Oliver as his ticket into the pockets of the Hollywood elite and kidnaps Oliver back. There are people looking out for Oliver's well-being, however, and Sikes and his band of thieves get caught, though things don't turn out all that badly for anyone in the end. Multiple sets.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

ACT I

- Scene 1: January, 1955. Bumble orphanage.
- Scene 2: MacDonald's farmhouse, several weeks later.
- Scene 3: Tinseltown Malt Shop, a week later.
- Scene 4: Hollywood and Vine, a short time later.
- Scene 5: Drive-in, that night.

ACT II

- Scene 1: Bigelow Studios, Brewster living room set, three weeks later.
- Scene 2: Street outside the studio, immediately after.
- Scene 3: Tinseltown Malt Shop, a short time later.
- Scene 4: Tinseltown Malt Shop, later, at 9 pm.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(15 m, 27 w, 3 flexible, extras, doubling possible.)

MRS. BUMBLE: Head of the orphanage.
BABS: Her assistant.
AGGIE: An orphan.
ALBERTA: Another.
MARTHA: Another.
OLIVER T: Another.
MRS. MACDONALD: A farm wife.
OLD MACDONALD: A farmer.
NELLIE: Their oldest daughter.
KELLY: Another daughter.
ELLIE: Another.
TV ANNOUNCER: Announces the TV programs. One or several.
BARNEY BREWSTER: TV father.
BEULAH BREWSTER: TV mother.
BOBBY BREWSTER: Their TV son.
BETSY BREWSTER: Their TV daughter.
FLO: Waitress at the malt shop.
NANCY: Another waitress.
ARTY DODGER: A young pickpocket.
BUTCH, EDDIE, SAMMI, PINKY, ACE, JO, JANET: Other pickpockets.
BILL SIKES: Head of the gang.
ROSCOE: His sidekick.
OFFICER BILKIE: A policeman.
PATTI: A singer.
PEGGY: Her partner.
POLLY: Another partner.
CHILD 1
MOTHER 1
CHILD 2
MOTHER 2
GIRL 1 - 2
BOY 1 - 2
MR. BIGELOW: Head of a movie studio.
MISS MANSFIELD: His secretary.
GOMEZ BRANSON: TV director
WOMAN 1
WOMAN 2
EXTRAS: As customers at the Malt shop.

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PROPS

BABS - Box of corn flakes.

BUMBLE - Coat, earmuffs, whistle, glasses.

OLIVER - TV dinners, two TV trays, broom, bundle tied to stick, rug.

ARTY - Money, Coke, Tabasco sauce bottle.

BILKIE - Billy club.

ACE - Deck of cards, book.

ROSCOE - Bag, milk.

BUTCH - Watch, two wallets, coins.

EDDIE - Two dollars.

SAMMI - Lipstick, compact.

PINKY - Three handkerchiefs, diamond stick pin.

JO - Purse, wallet.

JANET - Camera, mannequin hand attached to purse, wallet.

PATTI - Comb, walkie-talkie, billy club.

PEGGY - Necklace, camera, billy club.

POLLY - Bracelet, billy club.

BOY 1 - Popcorn bag, wallet.

BOY 2 - Wallet.

MOTHER 2 - Purse.

GOMEZ - Clipboard.

NANCY - Basket of food, coin, purse, squirt gun, broom.

BILL - Comb.

MISS MANSFIELD - Notebook, pen.

FLO - Key.

SET PROPS - Bowls, wooden spoons, ladle, sign "Obey or Else!

You are Property of Bumble Orphanage," pitcher of milk, sign "Tinseltown Malt Shop," various other signs, condiments, napkin holder, two stools, ladder, pole with light, phones.

SOUND EFFECTS - 50's song, chase music, window breaking.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The Bumble orphanage, January, 1955. Two long tables, one SL, one SR, sit facing audience. Large aisle between tables at center. Bench facing audience behind each table. At CS is a small table. Bowl of cornflakes on top. One pitcher of milk. Sign above bowl proclaims, "Obey - or Else! You are Property of Bumble Orphanage." BABS is dumping cornflakes into bowl. MRS. BUMBLE enters SL, wearing coat.)

MRS. BUMBLE: Mmmmmm! Smells delicious, Babs.
(BABS sneezes onto cornflakes.) Now, they'll taste delicious.

BABS: *(Wiping HER nose with her sleeve.)* Sorry, Mrs. Bumble. But it's mighty cold in here.

MRS. BUMBLE: It's January. What do you expect?

BABS: Couldn't we build a fire or give out fur coats?

MRS. BUMBLE: If you'd been intended to have a fur coat, you'd have been born with one. And as for a fire, it costs money!

BABS: Well, the state pays you for each of the orphans. Use that money.

MRS. BUMBLE: But then, I couldn't buy lovely outfits like this one!

(MRS. BUMBLE whips off her coat revealing a garish dress with a wild print pattern. She puts on dark glasses.)

BABS: Mrs. Bumble!

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Mugging like Marilyn Monroe.)* Do I really look like that new movie star, M. M.?

BABS: Montezuma Marauder?

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Angrily.)* Marilyn Monroe!

BABS: Well, I ... I guess so.

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Furiously.)* You guess so?!

BABS: Okay. You do look like her.

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Sweetly.)* Pour yourself an extra bowl of cornflakes!

BABS: *(Sarcastically.)* Whoopee!

(MRS. BUMBLE blows a whistle. From SL and SR, ORPHANS enter in line. They stand behind their benches on either side. Mrs. Bumble walks DS crossing in front of each table.)

MRS. BUMBLE: Well, well, well. You all look so ... orphaned this morning. Are we hungry?

ORPHANS: Yes, Mrs. Bumble.

MRS. BUMBLE: Then eat hearty. We've got a big day ahead of us.

AGGIE: What are we going to do, Mrs. Bumble?

ALBERTA: Can we go to school?

MRS. BUMBLE: Your I.Q. is already 245, Alberta. If you get any smarter, you might be able to figure a way out of here!

MARTHA: I'd like to spend the day reorganizing the linen closet.

MRS. BUMBLE: You know, Martha, you'll either end up in a nuthouse or you'll have your own television show someday. And what about you, Oliver? Nothing dumb to say this morning?

OLIVER: Gosh, but you look pretty.

MRS. BUMBLE: Well, how sweet. Now, after breakfast we're all going to shovel the snow on the driveway.

AGGIE: The driveway's two miles long!

ALBERTA: We don't know how to shovel snow.

MRS. BUMBLE: It's just like licking an envelope.

MARTHA: Couldn't we just plant an herb garden or make toss pillows?

MRS. BUMBLE: Enough!

(MRS. BUMBLE blows a whistle. The KIDS line up SL and SR. BABS gives each orphan a ladle of cornflakes. Each orphan then goes to end of table and works his or her way back to center. When all have a bowl of cornflakes, Mrs. Bumble blows a whistle. The orphans sit. She blows

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another whistle and they eat. We hear the crunch, crunch, crunch of corn flakes. Mrs. Bumble puts on a pair of earmuffs. Babs exits SR.)

AGGIE: Hey, Oliver! Are you going to do it?

ALBERTA: Shhhhhh! Mrs. Bumble will hear you. We're not supposed to talk during meals.

MARTHA: She can't hear anything with those earmuffs on. Why do you think I made them for her?

AGGIE: If you don't do it, Oliver, we'll never get enough food around here.

ALBERTA: A bowl of dry corn flakes isn't enough to get us through the day. The report in the *Journal of Harvard Medicine* said we need at least four bowls a day.

MARTHA: Eggs Benedict, Belgian waffles, country gravy and biscuits would really hit the spot.

OLIVER: Do I have to?

(AGGIE, ALBERTA, MARTHA all nod. Slowly OLIVER gets up from his seat carrying his bowl. He walks to MRS. BUMBLE. He pulls on her sleeve. All are in shock and horror.)

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Shouting.)* What?! What do you want?!

OLIVER: Please, ma'am, I want some more.

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Shouting.)* What? I can't hear you!

OLIVER: Please, ma'am, I want some more.

MRS. BUMBLE: *(Shouting.)* Speak up, you brat!

(OLIVER pulls her earmuffs off.)

ALL: *(Shouting.)* Please, ma'am! He wants some more!

MRS. BUMBLE: More?! No one asks for more! You despicable, greedy brat! Just wait 'til I get hold of you!

(SHE chases OLIVER around. He manages to go under the table, whereas she cannot. Chase ends with BABS entering SR followed by MRS. and OLD MACDONALD. Mrs. Bumble ends up halting just in front of the MacDonalds.)

End of Freeview