

Character Breakdown

Jack Kelly

The charismatic leader of the Manhattan newsies, is an orphaned dreamer and artist who yearns to get out of the crowded streets of New York and make a better life for himself out West. Fiercely protective of his best friend, Crutchie, and very loyal, Jack isn't afraid to use his voice to attain better conditions for the working kids of New York City. Look for an actor who can command the stage with ease, possesses strong vocal abilities, and can exude Jack's tough-guy exterior and his big heart.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Katherine Plumber

An ambitious young reporter, works hard to make a name for herself as a legitimate journalist in a time when women aren't taken seriously. Quick, funny, and resourceful, Katherine should be a strong singer with excellent diction for her showstopping number, "Watch What Happens." Because Katherine and Jack possess a strong bond, consider auditioning these roles together to get a sense of the performers' repartee.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: A3

Crutchie/Casey

Jack's best friend and a dedicated newsie with a "bum leg" from polio that causes pain, but helps sell more papes. Walking with the assistance of a crutch doesn't define the ever-positive newsie, so look for an actor who can portray Casey's goofy-sweet sense of humor and optimistic resilience. Crutchie is accustomed to modifying daily activities for their disability, so consider both the character and actor's abilities when blocking and choreographing.

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: A3

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, cast a strong actor and singer who can lead "Seize the Day" while smartly portraying the brains of the resistance.

Gender: Male

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Les

Davey's cheeky younger sibling, is excited by the newsies' freedom and loves their independent lifestyle. This pint-sized charmer should present as younger than the other newsies

Vocal range top: F4

Vocal range bottom: B3

Medda Larkin

Inspired by the African- American vaudeville performer, Aida Overton-Walker, A big-voiced singer and star of the Bowery (see the "Dramaturgy" document in Downloadable Resources). A proud supporter of the newsies, she offers her theater as a safe haven for their revolution. Look for a performer who can portray this astute entertainer with great comic delivery, while standing firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

Gender: Female

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: G3

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. For this non-singing role, cast a strong actor with a sharp and imposing presence.

Gender: Male

Wiesel

Aka "Weasel". A disgruntled paper-pusher who uses the Delancey brothers as his muscle, runs distribution for the World and has little patience or sympathy for the newsies. Feel free to incorporate this actor into the newsies ensemble when possible.

Gender: Male

Newsies

The hard-working kids of New York City who go on strike for a livable wage. Find moments to showcase any talented tumblers or dancers within this group. Given the nature of this show, most other characters can double as newsies to help fill in the musical numbers. Within the newsies ensemble, consider dividing the group into featured dancers and singers in order to play to the strengths of your performers.

These include the following roles: Race, Albert, Muriel, Nancy, Specs, Pigtails, Hazel, Buttons, Tommy Boy, Romeo, Jo Jo, Scabs, Brooklyn Newsies, Spot Conlon

Darcy

A photographer who works with Katherine.

Dorothy

Katherine's upperclass friend whose parents own the *New York Tribune* and help the newsies print the Newsies Banner.

Gender: Female

Bill

Katherine's upperclass friend whose parents own the *New York Journal* and help the newsies print the Newsies Banner.

Gender: Male

Working Children

Featured in "Once and For All," they represent all of the other child laborers who receive the Newsies Banner and ultimately become a part of the children's crusade. These working kids can be pulled from your larger newsie ensemble.

Seitz

The editor of the *World* who advises Pulitzer, but ultimately admires the kids' newspaper.

Bunsen

Pulitzer's bookkeeper who helps Pulitzer come up with the idea to raise the newsies' price per paper.

Hannah

Pulitzer's secretary who is a clever advocate for the newsies.

Gender: Female

Snyder

The crooked warden of The Refuge. A filthy and horrible juvenile reformatory, is concerned only with catching enough kids to keep their government checks coming. Look for an actor who can evoke an imposing and sinister presence.

Governor Teddy Roosevelt

A well-respected lifelong public servant who inspires Jack to stand up to Pulitzer. Cast an actor with the ability to portray the maturity and stature of this well-respected leader.

Gender: Male

Bowery Brigade

Includes the roles of the upbeat and charming Ada, Olive, and Ethel. A group of vaudeville performers in Medda's act. While only three performers have solos, feel free to make this ensemble group as big or small as best fits your production.

Gender: Female

Police Officers

Includes the role of the Police Chief. They intimidate the newsies and arrest Crutchie. Cast as many officers as suits your production.

Pat

An efficient stage manager who introduces Medda's act.

Woman

A newspaper customer.

Gender: Female