

TINY TIM RUNS THE MARATHON

By Jonathan Dorf

Cast of Characters

CORPORATE MOMMY

CORPORATE DADDY

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON, either gender, played by a member of the ensemble

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON, either gender, played by a member of the ensemble

THIRD RELIABLE PERSON, either gender, played by a member of the ensemble

OLIVER TWIST, late teens, orphan turned pitchman

NARRATOR, female, narrates Oliver's commercial

SMACK BLACKWELL, female director, tough and fresh out of film school

NANCY, female, about Oliver's age

COSTUME AND MAKEUP PEOPLE

FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

CAMERA OPERATORS

TINY TIM, mid to late teens, just younger than Oliver

MARTHA CRATCHIT, Tiny Tim's older sister

MRS. CRATCHIT, Tiny Tim's mother

CINEMATOGRAPHER, female, hip, professional (though could just as easily be male instead, depending on your casting needs)

PHILISTINA, female, late teens to early 20s, the kind of young woman who can snare a man in her web

PINK SLINK, female, photogenic news reporter

FIRST MP, either gender, a member of Parliament

SECOND MP, either gender, a member of Parliament

FIRST CHILD LETTER WRITER

SECOND CHILD LETTER WRITER

THIRD CHILD LETTER WRITER

MASKED WOMAN

MAN IN FRONT OF CURTAIN

PARTY DANCERS, played by members of the ensemble

HOSTAGE TAKER

CHORUS OF CHARACTERS, played by members of the ensemble

ARTFUL DODGER, male, just older than Oliver, fallen on hard times

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, female, mid-teens, youngest Fairy Tale Combo member

CINDERELLA, female, leader of the Fairy Tale Combo

SNOW WHITE, female, older than Little Red Riding Hood

YOUNG NEWSPAPER CARRIER

KID WITH BALL

NEW INTERN

FORMER INTERN

DISHONEST PHOTOGRAPHER

SERIES OF TINY TIM SUPPORTERS, played by members of the ensemble

NEW CORPORATE DADDY

PUBLIC ADDRESS ANNOUNCER

RUNNERS, played by members of the ensemble

It is possible to cast the play with an ensemble of roughly 14 actors, or to use an almost unlimited number (there are over 35

speaking roles).

Setting Notes

The play takes place in a variety of suggested settings including a corporate office, a television production set, a dressing room, the street, a hill, a marathon course and a rooftop. Because the scenes change quickly, almost cinematically, it's important that sets be kept as minimal as possible. Depending on your stage, it may be possible to use area staging.

Production Notes

Productions may wonder whether to use British accents, but given that the play features a crashing together of mythologies (Dickens, fairy tale characters and a variety of new fictional people), accents are optional. If your production does use accents, I'd only give them to the Dickensians, and not to the fairy tale characters. Sometimes they're more distracting than they're worth.

When two speakers' names appear on the same line, they are meant to speak simultaneously.

SCENE 1

The present, sort of. A corporate headquarters. CORPORATE DADDY holds a crutch-- ideal for a small teenage boy-- aloft. CORPORATE MOMMY looks on in horror.

It can't be. CORPORATE MOMMY

It is. CORPORATE DADDY

Are you sure? CORPORATE MOMMY

Very sure. CORPORATE DADDY

They all look alike to me. CORPORATE MOMMY

Not this one. CORPORATE DADDY

You can honestly tell them apart? I can't. CORPORATE MOMMY

(beat)
Maybe he just outgrew it. Children outgrow things all the time.

People heard him say, "I don't need this anymore." CORPORATE DADDY

What people? CORPORATE MOMMY

Reliable people. CORPORATE DADDY

Reliable people heard him use those words. CORPORATE MOMMY

That's what I'm telling you. CORPORATE DADDY

Those precise words. CORPORATE MOMMY

That's what I told you. CORPORATE DADDY

CORPORATE MOMMY

(beat)

So he walks now. Walk, walk, walk. Nobody's going to get that excited about a little walking. I walk. You walk. Everyone walks.

(beat)

What?

CORPORATE DADDY

It's not just walking.

CORPORATE MOMMY

Crawling?

CORPORATE DADDY

Other way.

CORPORATE MOMMY

He walks and chews gum.

Corporate Daddy shakes his head.

CORPORATE MOMMY (CONT'D)

Whistles? He whistles and walks.

Again, Corporate Daddy shakes his head.

CORPORATE MOMMY (CONT'D)

Sings?

CORPORATE DADDY

Runs.

CORPORATE MOMMY

You saw this?

CORPORATE DADDY

Reliable people.

Lights up on three RELIABLE PEOPLE, gender and age flexible, though not children.

CORPORATE MOMMY

What did you see?

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON

The boy they call Tiny Tim.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON

He's not a boy anymore.

THIRD RELIABLE PERSON

Little fella's nearly grown.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON
(gestures to indicate someone
who's short)

Still small, though.

CORPORATE MOMMY

What did you see?

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON

He put down the crutch.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON

Dropped it really.

THIRD RELIABLE PERSON

More of a fling, I'd call it.

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON

And then he takes a step. And another. One foot in front of the other. Faster. Again and again after that. It begins to turn into a skip--there's just a hint of syncopation. But with every step, his confidence grows and the stutter cum hop becomes a little smaller...and smaller, until it vanishes completely. And he is--at first it's just a jog, but then it becomes a slow and steady run.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON

He's not going to be a sprinter, mind you.

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON

And people begin to run behind him. Young children at first, but then mothers and fathers, policemen and plumbers, bicyclists and tricyclists, their faces lighting up as he passes. They get out of their cars and limos, their busses and ambulances, to chase after him as if he was the Pied Piper himself.

THIRD RELIABLE PERSON

Children leave their parents to run.

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON

And parents leave their children.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON

Even cats and dogs and rats from the sewers and squirrels from the city park join in.

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON

He's eating a sandwich as he runs, only he's a messy eater and the animals go for the fallout.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON

But still, once they eat, they follow him...

THIRD RELIABLE PERSON
For a moment, we are as one.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON
Motivated.

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON
Inspired.

CORPORATE MOMMY
Inspired? Inspired to do what?

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON
I don't know.

SECOND RELIABLE PERSON
I don't think it mattered.

THIRD RELIABLE PERSON
But whatever it was, we were ready.

FIRST RELIABLE PERSON
We are still ready.

Lights down on the Reliable
People.

CORPORATE DADDY
He wants to run the marathon.

CORPORATE MOMMY
He can't do that. Who said that?

CORPORATE DADDY
He's going to try.

CORPORATE MOMMY
He can't do that.

CORPORATE DADDY
But people would love it. Imagine--once he was a crippled
little boy on death's door. Now look at him--Tiny Tim,
marathon runner.

(beat)
Think of how many people he could inspire to eat right, get
enough sleep, exercise regularly--

CORPORATE MOMMY
And?

CORPORATE DADDY
And what?

CORPORATE MOMMY
What's in it for us?

CORPORATE DADDY

What if...maybe just this once.

CORPORATE MOMMY

There is no just this once.

CORPORATE DADDY

But if people believe in him...

CORPORATE MOMMY

The slope is always slippery.

CORPORATE DADDY

(beat)

We used a series of actors instead. I swear--one kid was even better than Tim. Amazing body control, how he stumbled and got back up, stumbled again, trembling, his entire essence taut with exertion, as if he was sweating desperation--I was crying. Audience after audience just sat on their hands.

(beat)

Then, we show them grainy footage of Tim taken from a cell phone camera. You can barely make him out, but eyes light up. Breathing increases. Heartbeats quicken.

(beat)

It's him.

CORPORATE MOMMY

It can't be him. Not now. Maybe in a year or two or three, but not now.

CORPORATE DADDY

I don't think he'll want to wait. When a flower wants to bloom--

CORPORATE MOMMY

You shove it in the freezer.

(beat)

What would you do if you were hard at work in your office--

CORPORATE DADDY

I'm always hard at work in my office.

CORPORATE MOMMY

And while you were hard at work, someone came in and started rearranging your papers and your furniture, taking the phone out of your hands, typing on your computer...?

CORPORATE DADDY

Is this person competent?

CORPORATE MOMMY

Who cares if they're competent?

CORPORATE DADDY

If they're competent, I'd probably hit the course and shoot 9, maybe 18 if they're very competent. As long as I'm getting paid.

CORPORATE MOMMY

You can't.

CORPORATE DADDY

Why not? If the work is getting done...

CORPORATE MOMMY

You can't--because he stole your golf clubs.

CORPORATE DADDY

He what?!

CORPORATE MOMMY

He stole them right out of your closet.

CORPORATE DADDY

But those are my clubs.

CORPORATE MOMMY

Precisely.

CORPORATE DADDY

I spent money on them. Lots and lots of money. And time. We've bonded. They're like my children.

(beat)

Who is this guy? I'm going to kill him. Nobody threatens my children.

CORPORATE MOMMY

There is no guy.

CORPORATE DADDY

There's no guy?

CORPORATE MOMMY

It was a metaphor.

CORPORATE DADDY

So my clubs are safe?

CORPORATE MOMMY

Your clubs are in grave danger. All of our clubs are in grave danger.

CORPORATE DADDY

What do we do?

CORPORATE MOMMY

We are the ones who inspire people. We've invested millions,
and we will not be run out of the game by some upstart who
throws down a crutch.

CORPORATE DADDY

He's not taking my clubs.

CORPORATE MOMMY

We'll need Philistina. She'll take care of this.

CORPORATE DADDY

And the girls?

CORPORATE MOMMY

Philistina has a certain...charm.

(beat)

Let's hope he listens to reason.

End of scene.

SCENE 2

Lights up on OLIVER TWIST, late teens, no longer quite so waif-like as in his childhood. He's barefoot, walking in exaggerated fashion through a phony desert. It's a television studio. All around are COSTUME and MAKEUP PEOPLE, PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS, CAMERA OPERATORS--under the watchful eye of director SMACK BLACKWELL, female, fresh out of film school and more than a little cutthroat.

A NARRATOR, female, young and beautiful, reads off cue cards or a teleprompter as Oliver reenacts his journey.

NARRATOR

Exhausted. Starving. Facing scorching heat.

SMACK BLACKWELL

Where's the sweat? Somebody get me sweat...

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT swoops in and sprays sweat on Oliver, with some of it getting into his eyes.

NARRATOR

Facing scorching heat. A refugee with not a friend in the world...

OLIVER

I will get to London. I will.

SMACK BLACKWELL

More determined.

NARRATOR

Alone...

OLIVER

(trying to sound more determined)

I will get to London. I will.

SMACK BLACKWELL

As if your life depended on it. When in doubt, just be louder.

OLIVER

(louder)

I will get to London. I will.

SMACK BLACKWELL

I'm getting inspired.

OLIVER

I will get to London!

SMACK BLACKWELL

I believe!

(beat)

Wardrobe!

DRESSERS descend on Oliver,
transforming him from a
ragamuffin into a superspy,
complete with tuxedo shirt.

SMACK BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

I don't see his cue cards!

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS holding cue
cards scramble into position.
All is finally ready.

OLIVER

Twist. O Twist. And I've got the juice. With the Dickens
Company's O Twist Juicer and Processor. Juice an orange in
the blink of an eye. Berries, melons, mangoes--it'll even
juice a coconut in under 15 seconds. And if you call
tomorrow--

SMACK BLACKWELL

What? Cut!

OLIVER

What did I--

SMACK BLACKWELL

If you call *today!* *Today!* Don't tell them to call tomorrow!
If they can put it off 'til tomorrow, they'll never call.
Was there a problem with the card?

(to the PAs)

What did I tell you about those cards, people? Rigor mortis!

OLIVER

No--it was my fault. Sorry.

SMACK BLACKWELL

Rolling!

OLIVER

And if you call today, I will personally autograph the cap.

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SMACK BLACKWELL

And cut. Moving on. Wardrobe!

The dressers descend on Oliver again. The James Bond outfit goes away, and he's back in rags.

OLIVER

(as they're putting the rags back on)

Can I ask a question?

(beat)

It's not really a question. Not really. I just wondered why we didn't shoot this part right after the walk to London, being that the clothing's the same and all.

SMACK BLACKWELL

You're being paid to be inspiring, and you do a great job. You inspire us all. But you don't get paid to wonder. And I don't get paid to wonder. So let's leave that to the professionals, shall we?

OLIVER

(beat)

Can I just have a minute?

SMACK BLACKWELL

Take five, everyone.

Oliver rushes off the set, but he remains onstage: he's in his dressing room. He's having a panic attack. He hyperventilates into a too conveniently available paper bag, sitting on the ground and rocking back and forth.

SMACK BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

(from the set--it has definitely not been five minutes)

OK. Time's up. We're on a schedule here.

Smack Blackwell points at NANCY, a young PA, not much older than Oliver.

SMACK BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

You--go find Twist.

NANCY

But it's only been--

SMACK BLACKWELL

Now!

Nancy enters Oliver's dressing room.

NANCY

Mr. Twist?

Oliver is too busy rocking back and forth to answer.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Mr. Twist, Ms. Blackwell needs you back.

(beat)

Oliver?

OLIVER

Nancy, don't let Bill Sikes take me! Don't let him.

NANCY

He won't, Oliver.

OLIVER

Don't let him!

NANCY

He can't. He's dead, remember? Swinging by his neck.

(beat--Oliver snaps out of it)

You had one of your attacks.

OLIVER

They're getting worse.

NANCY

Do you want me to tell her you're sick?

OLIVER

I don't know if I can do this anymore.

NANCY

I can't tell her that.

(beat)

Come on--where's the boy who walked to London in his bare feet, who survived thieves and murderers and--

OLIVER

What am I selling this time?

NANCY

Cereal, I think.

OLIVER

(beat)

Why do they buy it?

NANCY

Who?

OLIVER

All those people. Just because some kid walks miles in his bare feet or asks for more food at the workhouse or hangs on for dear life on the rooftop with a cold-blooded killer, how does that make him an expert on cereal?

NANCY

It's because they admire you. Because you make them want to be that boy who walked until his feet were bloody or the kid who stood up at the workhouse, who got stuffed in a coffin for defending his mother's honor, and they can't do those things, so they do what they can do, which is eat some cereal. They eat that cereal because in some small way, they feel a part of your journey. Because they love you.

OLIVER

But I don't even eat it. Have you tasted it?

NANCY

Kind of cardboardy. But it doesn't matter. They believe in you. We all believe in you.

OLIVER

(beat--as if trying to
remember something)

There's something about the rooftop. Bill Sikes and the rooftop.

NANCY

You were very brave.

OLIVER

It almost feels like it was a dream.

NANCY

It was very real in your films.

(beat)

People believe in you, Oliver. Isn't that all that matters?

She holds out her hand. He takes it. Together they go back to the commercial shoot.

SMACK BLACKWELL

Thank God. Touch up the rags!

Dressers and makeup descend like ants at a picnic.

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SMACK BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

Cue cards up!

The dressers and makeup finish their job, and Oliver is ready.

OLIVER

Need to fuel up in the morning? Whether you work in a workhouse or it just feels like one, with new Orphan O's you'll get the kind of healthy yummy that'll inspire you to put in a hard day's work at school or on the job. Those little round O's are so cute you'll never want to leave one in the bowl, alone like an orphaned baby. In fact, after your first bowl, you just might be saying, "Please sir, I want some more."

SMACK BLACKWELL

And cut. Moving forward...

The set transforms into a fake beach, with a backdrop of fake sun and palm trees--it can look totally silly.

SMACK BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

Rags off, speedo on!

OLIVER

(as wardrobe descends on him)

What?!

SMACK BLACKWELL

Come on, people. We're behind.

A PA hurtles toward Oliver holding a tiny speedo.

OLIVER

("heck no" or "no way" is also acceptable if necessary for your production)

Hell no!

Oliver storms off.

SMACK BLACKWELL

Twist!

(beat--points at Nancy)

You--get him back.

(beat)

Nobody move.

They all freeze, as the lights come down on the television set.

Elsewhere on stage, lights up on TINY TIM, mid-teens, wearing sweatpants, running in a circle. His sister, MARTHA, 20s, carrying a clipboard and a stopwatch. Their mother, MRS. CRATCHIT, "runs" with the aid of a cane in a much smaller circle within the one that Tim runs.

MARTHA CRATCHIT

Push it, Tim.

Tim runs faster.

MARTHA CRATCHIT (CONT'D)

You've got her.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Not this time, Timmy!

MARTHA CRATCHIT

Don't let her catch you!

Mrs. Cratchit is spinning so fast she's getting dizzy. Tim runs as hard as he can, but he's not exactly a world class marathoner. Mrs. Cratchit beats Tim to the "finish line," raising her arms in victory. As she does so, she loses her balance and falls. Tiny Tim towels off, as does Mrs. Cratchit.

TINY TIM

I nearly beat you.

(beat)

Mother, maybe you should let Martha race next time.

MARTHA CRATCHIT

You know I can't race and coach at the same time.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I'm fine, Tim.

(beat as they help her up)

I remember when you were truly tiny. You'd limp out to meet your father, and he'd lift you on his shoulders like you were no heavier than a feather.

TINY TIM

I miss Dad.

MRS. CRATCHIT
We all do, my child.

MARTHA CRATCHIT
Rest time is over, Tim.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Your sister is a slave driver.

MARTHA CRATCHIT
Mom!

TINY TIM
I asked her to, Mom.
(to Martha)
I can't feel my legs.

MARTHA CRATCHIT
(alarmed)
Are you becoming paralyzed?

TINY TIM
No--I'm just tired.

MARTHA CRATCHIT
I know what you need, Tim.

Martha pulls giant photos of Bob Cratchit and Scrooge from a large envelope. She places them in such a way that they're looking out on the training area.

TINY TIM
I feel like when Dad and Uncle Scrooge are watching me, I can do anything. It's like their example inspires me, and if I could do that for just one person...if a little boy or girl in a wheelchair sees me run and gets up and takes one tiny step, or a drunk vomits on my shoes as I go by, and it makes him want to put down the bottle, or a blind man hears me pass and is inspired to see, or at least to make out blurry shapes...it would all be worth it.

(beat)
I'm ready, Martha.

Tiny Tim starts to run in a circle again. Lights down on Tiny Tim, who exits running, with Martha and Mrs. Cratchit trailing.

SCENE 3

Oliver is holed up in his dressing room, breathing into the paper bag that he holds with one hand while trying to pack his things with the other. It's not going well. Beat. Enter Nancy.

NANCY

Mr. Twist?

OLIVER

Go away.

NANCY

Mr. Twist, are you all right?

(beat)

Can we talk about this?

OLIVER

There's nothing to talk about. I'm not going out there in a--

He launches into a fit of hyperventilation.

NANCY

Oliver?

OLIVER

You will not give me another pep talk.

His attempt to pack with one hand is a disaster.

NANCY

I'm not giving you a pep talk.

OLIVER

Tell me I'm inspirational or some line like that.

NANCY

You are. But OK--I won't.

OLIVER

Good.

She watches as he futilely tries to pack. Beat.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Can you help me?

NANCY

I can't help you pack.

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OLIVER
Fine. I'll do it myself.

He tries again, and again it's a disaster.

NANCY
You can't just give up. People are counting on you.

OLIVER
Do I look like a swimsuit model to you?

NANCY
(beat)
Yes?

OLIVER
You have to say that. They pay you.

NANCY
A "stipend."

Nancy finally gives up and moves to help him. As she moves, Oliver has an episode.

OLIVER
Don't come closer!

NANCY
But you said--

OLIVER
I'll jump--I'll do it!

NANCY
Oliver, you're in a--

OLIVER
You'll never take me alive, Monks!

NANCY
But I'm not--who?

OLIVER
I won't be a hostage.

NANCY
Help! Someone, help!

Enter Smack Blackwell and a phalanx of Crew Members from earlier with all possible speed.

OLIVER
Stay back!

SMACK BLACKWELL
(sotto)
Roll on this...

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Is he on drugs?

NANCY
You can't shoot this--he's hallucinating.

OLIVER
Stay back or I'll do it, Monks.

SECOND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Who's Monks?

SMACK BLACKWELL
No idea, but it's brilliant.

OLIVER
I mean it.

SMACK BLACKWELL
First time he's ever acted his way out of a wet paper bag.

NANCY
He needs help.

SMACK BLACKWELL
We'll CGI this Monks character together with Sikes on the roof--

OLIVER
Stay where you are!

SMACK BLACKWELL
(to Nancy)
Say something Monks would say.

NANCY
This is wrong.

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Monks wouldn't say that.

NANCY
How do you know?

OLIVER
I won't steal for you!

Do it or you're fired.

SMACK BLACKWELL

I...uh...

NANCY

The Costumer plops a villainous looking hat on Nancy's head.

OLIVER

I'll step off this ledge before I break into another house.

NANCY

I killed Nancy.

OLIVER

You--

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

I thought Sikes killed Nancy.

SECOND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Maybe they killed her together.

SMACK BLACKWELL

Who cares--just keep rolling.

OLIVER

You--

SMACK BLACKWELL

I could cry this is so good.

OLIVER

Monster.

NANCY

I'll get you my pretty little orphan, and your little dog too.

SMACK BLACKWELL

This is genius--we can get him to reenact the whole thing.

NANCY

When the evil comes, it will eat you!

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Uh...Nancy?

THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

If her head spins around, I'm so outta here.

OLIVER

Don't come closer!

NANCY

It will eat you like a starving man goes after the first crumbs he's seen in days. Eat you like a world champion at a hot dog eating competition. Eat you like a gigantic slice of triple chocolate cake, so rich and creamy with its alternating layers of bittersweet chocolate, chocolate (pronounced guh-nosh) ganache, and dark chocolate, creating a delicate point and counterpoint as their contrasting flavors slide across my tongue.

There's an awkward silence.

SMACK BLACKWELL

(pointing at three PAs)

You. You. You. Make crowd noise.

Beat. The three PAs spring into action, improvising crowd noises.

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Leave the boy alone, Sikes--

SECOND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Monks.

THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

(clueless)

Sikesmonks, surrender, you villain.

Beat. The "Sikesmonks" snaps Oliver out of it.

OLIVER

What are you doing?

(beat)

You're filming me?

SMACK BLACKWELL

We can CGI the speedo. Problem solved.

OLIVER

Nancy, why are you wearing that hat? Bill Sikes' hat.

NANCY

I was...I was just...

SMACK BLACKWELL

She was just helping you achieve your full inspirational potential.

OLIVER

(to Nancy)

I thought you were my friend.

NANCY

I am.

OLIVER

Then why'd you let them do this to me?
(to Smack Blackwell)

I quit.

He exits. The CINEMATOGRAPHER,
hip, female, professional, shakes
her camera--something is wrong.

SMACK BLACKWELL

No problem. I can eat off that footage for a year.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

We have a problem.

SMACK BLACKWELL

Don't you dare.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

I'm not getting picture.

SMACK BLACKWELL

But you got some of it, right?

The Cinematographer shakes her
head.

SMACK BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

(to Nancy)

This is all your fault. You and your chocolate cake. I hate
chocolate cake.

(beat)

Get him back or you'll never work in this town again.

Blackout.

SCENE 4

Tiny Tim towels off from his running. Enter PHILISTINA, female, late teens, sexy and used to snaring unsuspecting--and even suspecting--men.

PHILISTINA

I like how you run.

TINY TIM

Thanks.

(beat)

I'm kind of sweaty. Sorry.

PHILISTINA

Sweat looks manly on a man.

TINY TIM

Yeah?

PHILISTINA

Yeah.

TINY TIM

I was just practicing.

PHILISTINA

Why practice? You're already perfection.

TINY TIM

(holds out his hand)

Hi. I'm Tim.

PHILISTINA

You're sure it's not Tiger?

TINY TIM

(beat--tries playing)

Rawr.

Philistina offers her hand so that Tim can kiss it. He's not entirely sure what to do, but she gestures, making lip-smacking sounds, and he gets the idea and kisses her hand.

PHILISTINA

Philistina.

TINY TIM

It's a pleasure to meet you.

PHILISTINA
Likewise, Tim the Tiger, you sweaty running man.

TINY TIM
I'm in training.

PHILISTINA
I'll bet you are.

TINY TIM
Really.

(beat)
It's kind of a long story.

PHILISTINA
I love stories.

TINY TIM
(beat)
Well, when I was little--

PHILISTINA
Wait! Tell it right.
(beat)
A good story always begins with "once upon a time."

TINY TIM
Once upon a time. OK.
(beat)
Once upon a time, there was a boy named Tim.

PHILISTINA
Tim the tiger cub.

TINY TIM
And this boy--

PHILISTINA
Purr...

TINY TIM
This boy had a bad leg. And because of his bad leg, he
couldn't walk so well. Either he used a crutch, or his
father would carry him.

PHILISTINA
Ooh...that's so sad.

TINY TIM
Don't feel sorry for him.

PHILISTINA
Sowwwy...

TINY TIM

Tim didn't mind. In fact, he liked it a little, because people would see him and find it comforting. As bad as they had it, they weren't the sick-looking gimp on the street corner. And he had this great catchphrase: "God bless us, every one."

PHILISTINA

That was you? I love that one. Do it again.

TINY TIM

God bless us, every one.

PHILISTINA

God bless us, every one. That's so...hot.

TINY TIM

So Tim was probably going to die, but his dad's boss, Ebenezer Scrooge, meets these ghosts who convince him to be a nicer person, or he just goes loopy. Either way, he totally hooks Tim up, and Tim doesn't die. He even learns to walk in short bursts.

PHILISTINA

What about the story of the boy who learns to walk, meets the girl of his dreams and lives happily ever after?

TINY TIM

Do you want to hear the rest?

PHILISTINA

(getting friendly)

I like happily ever afters.

TINY TIM

I'll make it quick. Mr. Scrooge gets run over by a drunken city bus driver and dies, but not before the medical bills eat up his life savings, leaving the boy's treatment incomplete. And that same bus driver, crazed with grief after what he's done and on his way to drive his bus off a cliff, runs over the boy's loving father, who was on his way to a seaside vendor to buy fresh cod.

PHILISTINA

That's so tragic. You poor thing.

(beat)

What do you think of this outfit?

TINY TIM

It's...uh...I like it.

PHILISTINA

What could I do to make you love it?

Uh...

TINY TIM

PHILISTINA
What could I do to make you love me?

She gets much more aggressive,
perhaps taking his hand, cuddling
with him or more, depending on
the needs of your production.

PHILISTINA (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

TINY TIM
I'm in training.

PHILISTINA
Don't you love me?

TINY TIM
It's not that I--

PHILISTINA
Don't you think I'm beautiful?
(beat)
I made myself beautiful just for you.

TINY TIM
Of course you're beautiful.

PHILISTINA
You're just saying that.

TINY TIM
I mean it. You are.

PHILISTINA
Then show me.

TINY TIM
How?

PHILISTINA
Come away with me.

TINY TIM
(beat)
OK. Right after the marathon. Where are we going?

PHILISTINA
No! You have to come now.

TINY TIM
I can't.

PHILISTINA
I thought you said I was beautiful.

TINY TIM
You are, but--

Philistina begins to cry.

TINY TIM (CONT'D)
Philistina, don't cry.

PHILISTINA
(bawling)
My heart is breaking. Crack by crack. You're tearing it into teeny, tiny pieces.

TINY TIM
(reaching)
It's not you. It's me.

PHILISTINA
It's not too late, Timmy the Tiger. My Tiger. You can still prove your love, your eternal love for me.

TINY TIM
Sorry--I have to run this marathon first. It's just something I have to do.

Philistina cries and exits dramatically and painfully slowly, almost in slow motion, giving Tiny Tim ample time to change his mind. But he doesn't. Exit Philistina as the lights dim.

SCENE 5

Nancy and the three Production Assistants are on the street looking for Oliver. Other members of the ensemble should play PASSERSBY.

NANCY

(to the Production Assistants)

Remember, this has to stay quiet.

The Production Assistants fan out, talking to different Passersby--we catch snippets of their conversation.

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Excuse me, have you seen my friend?

SECOND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

He's about

(indicates Oliver's height)

this high.

THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Yeah, he's missing. That's why I'm looking for him.

NANCY

(describes whatever Oliver is wearing in your production)

He was wearing _____.

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

It's really important that I find him.

SECOND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Like soon.

THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

He's a little--

The Third PA makes the gesture for "crazy."

NANCY

He goes by Oliver.

(lying)

But not *that* Oliver.

FIRST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Of course not *that* Oliver.

SECOND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Have you seen an Oliver, but not *the* Oliver?

THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Yeah, Oliver Twist. That's the one.

Everyone on stage stops what
they're doing and looks at the
Third Production Assistant.

THIRD PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

(to Nancy)

Oops.

Lights up on PINK SLINK,
attractive female reporter.

PINK SLINK

This is Pink Slink with breaking news out of London, where Oliver Twist, inspirational figure to millions across the world, is missing. A spokesman for 10 Downing Street has vowed to dedicate every necessary resource to achieving the safe return of the beloved former orphan.

Several MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT are
on their hands and knees,
examining the ground. Pink Slink
interviews them.

PINK SLINK (CONT'D)

I'm standing here at the House of Parliament, where several MPs are on their hands and knees.

FIRST MP

We passed a resolution this afternoon to leave no stone unturned in our search for Oliver Twist, and by George, this is one promise we intend to keep.

PINK SLINK

This is just one of dozens of locations outside Parliament where MPs are turning stones to show their solidarity and their determination to bring Oliver Twist home.

Want to read the rest of the play? Just click on the YouthPLAYS link to place an order and receive a free perusal copy!