

Newsies Synopsis and Character Descriptions

Synopsis

Disney's *Newsies* is set in New York City at the turn of the 20th century and follows Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy with dreams of a better life. When powerful publisher Joseph Pulitzer raises the prices that the newsies must pay for papers, Jack and his fellow newsboys go on strike, demanding fair treatment. With the help of new friends Davey, Les, and aspiring reporter Katherine Plumber, Jack rallies the newsies to fight for their rights against overwhelming odds. Despite facing opposition from Pulitzer and the city's authorities, the newsies unite and organize a massive rally that garners public support. With an unexpected ally in Teddy Roosevelt, the Governor of New York, the newsies triumph, forcing Pulitzer to negotiate. Ultimately, Jack realizes the power of unity and friendship, finding hope for his future while celebrating the victory of standing up for justice.

Character Descriptions

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 strongly loyal, Jack isn't afraid to use his voice to attain better conditions for the working kids of New York City. Though living on the streets has given him a tough-guy exterior, Jack has a big heart and can demonstrate a sweet vulnerability.

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, she boldly captures the voice of a new generation rising in her coverage of the newsies' strike.

JOSEPH PULITZER - A pompous businessman through and through, owns The World newspaper 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.

CRUTCHIE - A dedicated newsie with a bum leg that's painful, but helps sell more papers. Jack Kelly's best friend relies on a goofy- sweet sense of humor and optimistic resilience. Crutchie is the heart of the resistance.

DAVEY - Les's straight-laced, bright older sibling starts selling newspapers to help the family earn a living, but becomes swept up in the fervor of the strike. A leader in their own right who is learning to use his voice to uplift others, Davey is the brains of the resistance.

LES - Davey's cheeky younger sibling, is inspired by the freedom of the newsies and loves their independent lifestyle. A precocious and natural newsie, Les is an intuitive salesperson and a pint-sized charmer.

SPOT CONLON - The proud leader of the Brooklyn newsies, boasts an intimidating reputation.

DARCY - The upper-class kid of a publisher who sides with the newsies.

BILL - The son of William Randolph Hearst who joins the newsies' cause.

WIESEL - Or "Weasel," runs the distribution window for The World and knows most of the newsies by name. Assisted by the intimidating Delancey siblings, who keep order by any means necessary, Wiesel is Pulitzer's disgruntled paper- pusher.

OSCAR & MORRIS DELANCEY - Tough siblings who work at the distribution window for the World, take the side of the publishers in the strike and are known to use their fists to make a point.

SNYDER - The crooked and sinister warden of The Refuge, a filthy and horrible orphanage, is concerned only with catching enough kids to keep government checks coming.

MEDDA LARKIN - A vaudeville performer, this big-voiced saloon singer and star of the Bowery offers her theater as a safe haven for the newsies. An astute entertainer with great comic delivery, she's a good friend to Jack and stands firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

SEITZ - Editor, advises Pulitzer, but ultimately admires the kids' newspaper.

BUNSEN - Pulitzer's bookkeeper, comes up with the idea to raise the newsies' price per paper.

HANNAH - Pulitzer's practical and insightful secretary.

NUNZIO - Pulitzer's barber.

MR/MRS JACOBI - Allows the newsies to congregate in the restaurant to plan their strike – when they don't have any paying customers, that is.

MAYOR - The Mayor of New York City rebuffs Pulitzer's attempts to shut down the newsies' strike.

GOVERNOR TEDDY ROOSEVELT - A well-respected lifelong public servant, inspires Jack to stand up to Pulitzer.

THE NEWSIES - Including Albert, Buttons, Elmer, Finch, Henry, Ike, Jo Jo, Mike, Mush, Race, Romeo, Specs, Splasher, and Tommy Boy, etc... are some of the hard-working kids of New York City that go on strike for a livable wage. Strong dancers who can sing well (jazz, ballet, tap, acrobatics/tumbling a plus).

ENSEMBLE: Nuns, Scabs, Bowery Beauties, Customers, Police, Goons, Guards.