***ACT 1/SCENE 5: Boys with Mother***

*Paulie and Howard move downstage to apartment setting where Mother sits*

MOTHER: Ain’t you home kinda late? I’ve had supper ready an hour now.

PAULIE: We got delayed by some older fellas…

MOTHER: What’s that supposed to mean?

HOWARD: Just a little street fight. I took care of things.

MOTHER: Yeah…well…Did you make any money, today?

HOWARD: Mr. Slominski, the butcher gave me two bits for taking his scraps down to the docks and selling ‘em.

MOTHER(motions for him to hand her money): Where is it?

*Howard hands her two bits. She puts it in her apro or coffee can.*

MOTHER: He gonna use you tomorrow too?

HOWARD: Nah…he said I was too slow on account of (*looks at Paulie)*…anyway he just needs someone quicker than me.

MOTHER: Yeah well, I gotta work…you boys know that. In fact, I’m going out in a little bit here…Joe said I could work some extra hours in the kitchen tonight…so I gotta get goin’ or I’ll be late. Now don’t leave the stove on, we can’t afford the gas.

*Howard gives Mother a disappointed look*

MOTHER: Don’t look at me that way! We all gotta do our bit…it ain’t my fault neither…if your father hadn’t left us we wouldn’t be in this situation.

HOWARD: Who left who?

MOTHER: He left *us*…that’s all you need to know! He’s the one gone north, not me! You got that?

HOWARD : Yeah…I got it.

PAULIE: We met a priest today!

HOWARD: Ahh Paulie…quiet.

MOTHER: A priest? Where?

PAULIE: Father Flanagan…he’s gonna help some of the boys.

MOTHER: What do you mean?

PAULIE: He’s making room for boys at The Workingmen’s Hotel…to keep ‘em out of reform school.

MOTHER: Howard, what’s he talkin’ about?

HOWARD: There ain’t much to it. Some of us got picked up on the street by a copper and taken to court.

PAULIE: He spoke up for us!

HOWARD: He told the judge he’d take charge of some of the boys if they needed a place. We didn’t stay.

MOTHER: Father Flanagan you say?

PAULIE: Yeah!

FATHER: The boys I have are from the streets, orphaned…or from the court system. Are you sure we can’t help you find a way to care for them yourself? A boy’s natural home is usually best.

MOTHER: No, no…look, don’t make me explain everything. I need you to take my boys, their father abandoned them and me, and we been scraping by for months. I gotta find work Father. I can’t take care of them proper anyhow. They’re getting too big for me to manage… just til I get me a good job?

PAULIE: Father…do you remember us from that day in the courtroom…you spoke up for us.

FATHER: Yes, I do….yes…

MOTHER: Sure! This here’s Paulie! He’s a good boy! And this is Howard. He’ll help you with Paulie. (pause) So you’ll take them then?

FATHER: Well I…

MOTHER: Look…we got kicked out of our apartment and I ain’t got no job. There’s nowhere to go…especially with a cripple boy. So we thought you could help… you was real good to the boys that one day.

FATHER: I can’t help thinkin’ they need their moth…

MOTHER: I just can’t do this no more…it’s the best thing for them…and they’d be better off in…in…your care than mine.

FATHER: All right my dear. We will keep them safe…until you come back for them. How will that be?

MOTHER: Fine, fine…and just so you won’t think the worst thing of me, I got five dollars here that I been savin’ up...for their room and board.

FATHER: There’s no need.

MOTHER: No! I want you to take it…otherwise it wouldn’t be right.

FATHER: *(pause*) if it makes you feel better.

MOTHER: Good bye Paulie…you be good for Father here…

PAULIE: I will…you’ll be back as soon as you find work then?

MOTHER: Sure, sure…I gotta get you those crutches don’t I?