

Act 1, Scene 1

*Positioned around the stage, each waking up to face the day, getting out of bed, looking at themselves in mirrors or singing to their roommates. Spotlights on each resident as they start to sing, and ultimately on Ms. Agatha looking in a mirror on her vanity.*

*“YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME” song.*

TOM

You shoulda seen me as a younger man  
Singing & dancing I led a ragtime band  
You shoulda seen me so many years ago

MR. NEWTON

You shoulda seen me when I was in my prime  
So charming, so dapper –time was on my side  
You shoulda seen me, when the world was young

MABEL

You shoulda seen me a starlet in the lights  
Signing autographs & staying out all night  
You should have seen me so many years ago

BARBARA

You shoulda seen me busy as a bee  
Flitting here and there, oh how they needed me  
You shoulda seen me when the world was young

RUTH

You shoulda seen me running my own shop  
Everyone knew me when I was at the top  
You should have seen me so many years ago

*(Everyone)*

You shoulda known us when we were just kids  
Going where we went & doin’ what we did  
You shoulda known us so many years ago

MS. AGATHA

You shoulda seen me, raising all those little girls  
I was all they had - their only home in the world  
You should have seen us, so many years ago

Ah, before that, I had my own family  
Mama and Daddy, baby boy made us three  
You should have seen us before they had to go...  
And nobody knows

Act 1, Scene 2

*As song ends, Ms. Agatha sings last line at her vanity. It is midnight. Nursing home private room for two. Ms. T trying to sleep, snoring, tossing. Ms. T throws a slipper at Ms. Agatha, breaking the moment of the song.*

MS. T: (*Throwing a slipper at her*) Hey....Hey...Hello.....Hey!

MS. AGATHA: Ouch! Whatcha do that for? Go back to bed.

MS. T: It will not. It's time to get up. Robert's coming to get me and I have to get ready.

MS. AGATHA: Oh you never make a lick of sense.

MS. T: (*Overlapping*) Robert's coming to get me...who are you going with?

MS. AGATHA: Could you shut up?

MS. T: (*Not hearing her*) Huh? Well you have to have a date. That would just be too much to not, and we're gonna find you one.

MS. AGATHA: Ima tell you what's gonna happen dearie. You are gonna shut your piehole and lie back down and fall back into the lovely nightmare we are both living.

MS. T: I for one will not sleep my life away. Now let me sit there, it's my turn.

*(They wrestle over hairbrush, Ms. T screams and falls).*

MS. AGATHA: Oh for God's Sake. Get up.

*(Ms. T starts to cry and is stuck on the ground, Ms. Agatha starts to pace.)*

MS. AGATHA: Well you're just gonna have to lie there.

MS. T: Help me, please.

MS. AGATHA: You did this to yourself sweetheart.

MS. T.: Please...

MS. AGATHA: Oh, fine. *(She attempts to help her up. Ms. T. Bites her hand. Ms. Agatha screams. Ms. T. snickers on the ground. The nurse comes in because of the scream. Two Orderlies come in)*

JOSHUA: *(Separating them.)* What is going on? Oh Ms. T, are you ok? Ms. Agatha, what did you do?

MS. AGATHA.: *(Pushing JOSHUA off of her.)* What did I do? Oh ok. Here we go again. *I was minding my own business, she threw a shoe at me.*

MS. T: She pushed me!

MS. AGATHA: I want to see the director. I don't even belong here. What kind of diagnosis do I have? You've got nothin on me.

*(Ms. Agatha. gets out of hand. There is a tussle. Orderly 1 tries to break up the fight.)*

JOSHUA: Leo, help me out in here!

LEO: *(Physically blocking the fight)* Ms. Agatha, would you sit down and leave that poor old lady alone?

MS. AGATHA: She bit me!

LEO: Let me see that...Ms. T, are we not feeding you enough? *(The women laugh despite themselves, begrudgingly.)* On a serious note Ms. T, can you agree to no more biting - we cannot bite.

MS. T.: I can't promise anything.

LEO: Ms. T.

MS. T: I'll do what I can. Make her promise to BE NICE.

LEO: Ms. Agatha, you be nice. Alright ladies it's breakfast time. Round's over - I think y'all are even for today. Let's keep it that way. Things will be better after you eat something. Can we agree to start over? Let's go to breakfast.

*(They grumble their agreement. Orderly and Leo exit.)*

MS. T: *(Whispers)* Ugly.

MS. Agatha: *(Whispers)* Shrew.

MS. T: *(Yells)* BITCH!

LEO: (*From offstage*) Ms. Agatha.

MS. AGATHA: It wasn't me!

(*They exit.*)

.....

Act 1, Scene 4

*The old folks gather in the Common Room for breakfast at a long table and chairs. The residents react to the not-so-great-looking food. We hear the sound of spoons clink on the plates, slurps, silences. A rhythm emerges that will signal "Thursdays at the nursing home" from here on - set with movement by ORDERLY and LEO along with overhead announcement.*

DR. RALPH: (*Via intercom*). Good Morning boys and girls! Today is Thursday May 4, 1961, the temperature is 56 degrees and there is a 60% chance of rain. Have an amazing day!

BARBARA: Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. And to you.

MS. AGATHA: Humph.

BARBARA: O! Well, I see we are bright eyed and bushy tailed?

JOSHUA: Watch it... I would not this morning Barbara...

BARBARA: Well *everyone* deserves to be addressed. And I will address.

RUTH: Mmmhmm. Here she goes, folks.

BARBARA: I for one had a wonderful night. As a matter of fact, From time to time, I'll find myself lying there thinking of my late, late husband and my son and just feel, well a thrill really.

TOM: (*Interjecting*). Hey-oh!

BARBARA: Such a wonderful man. A little bit of a temper. How he loved steak. Now I was thinking last night about a time that I had a rare steak in 1950.

MR. NEWTON: (*Newspaper in hand.*) Pass me the steak.

MABEL: It's not polite to read at the table, Mr. Newton.

MR. NEWTON: And let my brain rot like the rest of you. (*Hitting the paper*). Are you aware the Germans have built themselves a wall? Am I the only one with any marbles left around here? Now pass that steak over.

BARBARA: It was truly the best steak I had ever had.

MR. NEWTON: Does Cuba ring a bell? Castro? Anyone?

BARBARA: Perfectly rare.

MR. NEWTON: JESUS. Just pass me the steak.

JOSHUA: It's breakfast Mr. Newton, no one is having steak.

BARBARA: Now I, for one, have had a lot of steak.

TOM: Hey-O!

MABEL: (*Interjecting*) One really shouldn't eat too much steak.

BARBARA: Well I made it this far and I tell you, I have had the most wonderful, juiciest...

MS. AGATHA: Uh huh...I'm sure you have Barbara.

BARBARA: You may not believe me, but I used to live right next door to a butcher and from time to time, I would just go and get me a nice piece of meat...

TOM: (*Interjecting*) Hey-oh!!

MABEL: Tom!

BARBARA: Now, my son didn't like steak which I could never understand. He would ask me.. Mama...

(*MS. AGATHA stands up and moves to another chair*)

BARBARA: (*Turning to someone else*) Why oh why do we have steak 3 times a week?

MABEL: (*Interjecting, matter of fact*) Bad for the figure.

RUTH: (*Interjecting*) Get over it Mabel.

BARBARA: (*Overlapping*). And I would say, son, we are fortunate, very fortunate to be able to have steak and your mama just loves meat.

TOM: Hey-

MABEL: (*Cutting Tom off.*) Mind your manners, Tom!

BARBARA: A rare steak. Maybe medium rare, but do not, please do not cook it too much. I won't eat it. Really, I won't. Now here's how you cook a really good steak. Listen, my neighbor Ruby told me how to do this exactly the right way, and the first thing is, you have to get you one of those steak hammers...

RUTH: Enough Barbara!

BARBARA: And you take that hammer and just WHAM!

MABEL: Goodness gracious.

BARBARA: And then again...WHAM!

MABEL: Barbara, really!

BARBARA: And you just keep going until that steak has had it!

TOM: Hey-oh!

MABEL: Tom!

BARBARA: Season it.

MR. NEWTON: Wait one minute, there's no steak?

BARBARA: Sizzle it.....

RUTH: For God's Sake Barbara!!!

MABEL: Everyone needs to calm down.

BARBARA: Now the steak sauce is a whole other operation, Now listen—

ALL: Shut up!!!! Nooo! Groans, etc.

(Enter ANNIE, bursting in with her joyful energy. Everyone perks up and she talks to a few and we see Agatha leave the room.)

ANNIE: (*Entering SR*) GOOD MORNING!

MR. NEWTON: Oh, thank god!

RESIDENTS: (*All*) Good morning Annie!

LEO: Let me take that rain jacket, Ms. Annie - and how are you today?

ANNIE: (*Kissing his cheek in greeting*) Oh Leo, don't you call me Ms...

LEO: Alright. Annie.

ANNIE: And I am great, I'm GREAT!

MS T.: So good to see Annie! That face. Are you married yet?

ANNIE.: Not yet, Ms. T.

Ms. T: What a shame.

ANNIE: Now where is my good friend Ms. Barbara, there she is, hello sweetheart.

BARBARA: If there's one thing I know and I do know some things, we cannot WAIT for you to visit every Thursday.

MS. AGATHA: That's right Little Orphan Annie loves a cause. Did you pay a visit to the zoo before you came here?

ANNIE: How you doing Mr. Tom? (*Kissing him on the head*).

TOM: HEYOOOO!

MABEL: Don't you encourage him, Annie.

ANNIE: Ruth, you holding this place together today?

RUTH: (*Playing solitaire, too busy to talk*) Uh-huh.

ANNIE: So, tell me what's new this week?

RUTH: Pah!

MABEL: Goodness. What's new?

BARBARA: Well, I'm on a new dose of blood pressure medication. My pressure was 140 over 92, and then it's...

MR. NEWTON: I'll tell you what's new Annie.... don't bother asking any of them - Castro has taken down Batista and the Freedom Riders are headed down south as we speak. But all the talk you'll get around here is blood pressure breakfast items. And not an ounce of steak.

MABEL: (*Sigh*). You're the only thing that's new around here, Annie.

MR. NEWTON: Annie's not new. She comes every Thursday. Wanna know what's new  
- Cuba is now a COMMUNIST COUNTRY.

RUTH(*Ignoring him*). Can you not see you're in a room full of artifacts. Pshh. New.

*(WHAT'S NEW? Music begins as RUTH moves down stage, song is shared. During song, Annie's and Leo's role as caretakers to all is established).*

(Verse)

(Ruth) What's New?!

My daughter asked me (What's New?)

I think she's crazy

Is her vision getting hazy cause everything here's the same  
as yesterday

What's New?!

The food atrocious (What's New?)

The smell ferocious (What's New?)

My professional diagnosis is the same old same old same  
old sad today...

(Bridge)

(Mabel)Visitors – where are our visitors? Our young  
inquisitors? Our sweet grandkid-sitors?

Visitors – why no more visitors? Maybe it's just because  
there's nothing new to see....

(Everyone)What's New?!

(Newton)Got no respect here (What's New?)

(Tom) It's just neglect here (What's New?)

We're all henpecked here, abandoned by the kids we  
failed...

What's New?!

Just broken records (What's New?)

Just chess and checkers (What's New?)

That new director who takes our money won't buy us some  
booze...

Bridge –

No one cares when I try to explain about the rotten food,  
about the pain



Sometimes it's sun sometimes it's rain, it's pretty much the same to me....

What's New?!

I need a drink here (What's New?)

Ew what's that stink here (What's New?)

We're on the brink here

Please save us dear, please take us somewhere new!

MR. NEWTON: WHAT'S NEW? THEY'RE GONNA PUT A MAN IN OUTER SPACE IS FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!!!

Dr. RALPH: Do I hear my favorite beautiful youngsters having a ball in here?! And how are we enjoying our apple sauce this fine morning?

BARBARA: Well...it's very...smooth, and it has nice flavor to it.

DR. RALPH: (*Cutting her off*) Thank you, Barbara. Ms. Ruth where's your applesauce? Did Joshua not get you any this morning - Joshua, get in here.

RUTH: I don't-

DR. RALPH: I need all my residents looked after with the utmost care...do you understand Joshua?

JOSHUA: Yes, sir, Dr. Ralph.

RUTH: I didn't want any, Joshua, it's fine.

ANNIE: Good morning Mr. Ralph.

DR. RALPH: (*Nodding in greeting, Miffed that he didn't address him as "Dr," emphasizing "Miss"*) Miss. Annie. Well have a fine day my kiddos - for lunch we're having creamed corn! Y'all behave!

BARBARA: Now. Back to what I was saying...the SAUCE...it was...

RUTH: (*Exhales in disgust.*) Hhhhhhhh.

ANNIE: I cannot wait to hear about it, but I do have to go see Ms. Agatha.

BARBARA: (*Turning back to the group of residents*). You first put in some Worcesterster, and then a little half and half, not... you don't want whole cream. It has to have a little bit of milk....

*(Annie exits. Everyone groans a little. Barbara's line fades as lights fade.)*

.....

Act 2, Scene 4

*(Annie marches around the outside to Ms. Agatha's window. Ms. Agatha looks to see who is outside and slams the curtains shut. Annie refuses to stop knocking Ms. Agatha opens the curtains.)*

ANNIE: Ms. Agatha...! (Banging on the window) Scared of me??

MS. AGATHA: The windows don't open...remember?!

*(Annie realizes and is frustrated and continues to Knock. Ms. Agatha reluctantly opens the curtains.)*

ANNIE: *(Muffled.)* Patricia says you're scared of me?!

MS. AGATHA: What of you?

ANNIE: Scared of me!

AGATHA: Sick of you? Yeh... I am sick of you!

ANNIE: No! SCARED OF ME!

MS. AGATHA: Oh Annie! Scared of you? Pah! Annie...go away. *(She walks away.)*

ANNIE: *(Knocks hard)*. Don't you walk away from this window.

MS. AGATHA: HUH?

ANNIE: *(Knocks hard)*. Don't walk away.

MS. AGATHA: ME don't "walk away?" YOU walked away from me a long time ago!

ANNIE: Huh? Just let me in.

MS. AGATHA: Too late.

ANNIE: Please LET ME IN! Go tell Mr. Ralph to let me in and we can just talk.

MS. AGATHA: DOCTOR.

ANNIE: What?

MS. AGATHA: He's a doctor!!

ANNIE: Oh for God's sake. Ms. Agatha, what did I do?

MS. AGATHA: What did you do? If you don't know I can't help you. You can stop your little show.

ANNIE: No! I'm not going to go.

MS. AGATHA: I said stop your little...ugh, never mind.

MS. ANNIE: I'm trying to help you! I found another place for you!

MS. AGATHA: What???

ANNIE: Another HOME. A better one.

MS. AGATHA: I don't need your help, you spoiled brat.

ANNIE: What? I can't hear you.

MS. AGATHA. I. Said. You. Are. A. Spoiled. Brat.

ANNIE: SPOILED BRAT? You are LUCKY you have ANYONE who wants to visit you. You mean, ungrateful...

MS. AGATHA: UNGRATEFUL. I'm UNGRATEFUL. You want me to sign something that says I didn't take care of you when my entire life's work was to take care of ungrateful people like you. Just please... ENOUGH. I'm an old lady now I can't take this. I just want my peace. I don't want to give you any ...any statements. I tried to do right by all you...little girls. Orphanages were all we had! We did the best we could! I DID THE BEST I COULD. I did the best I could. Just leave me alone!

*(Beat.)*

ANNIE: I don't want you to be alone.

MS. AGATHA: No, YOU don't want to be alone and that is NOT MY PROBLEM!

*(She closes the curtains dramatically, falling back against the wall, exhausted by the interaction. Annie is stunned to silence.)*

MS. AGATHA: *(Sighs. Quietly, to herself)*. I'm sorry little orphan Annie. I've always been a terrible mother.

*(Lights out.)*