

MEDDA

Crutchie, how's the leg doing today?

CRUTCHIE

Sunny with zero percent chance of rain!

MEDDA

That's my Casey!

JACK

Miss Medda, I got a little situation out on the street. Mind if I hide out here a while?

MEDDA

Is Snyder the Spider after you again? Make yourself at home.

LES

Hey Jack, did you really escape jail on the back of Teddy Roosevelt's carriage?

CRUTCHIE

He sure did!

DAVEY

What would the Governor be doing at a juvenile jail?

JACK

So happens he was runnin' for office and wanted to show he cared about orphans and such. So while he got his mug in the paper, I got my butt in the back seat and off we rode together.

LES

You really know Governor Roosevelt?

MEDDA

He don't, but I do. Teddy's a regular patron of the arts, been a big fan of mine for years. By the way, Jack, can you paint me some more of these backdrops? Things have been going so well that I can actually pay you soon.

JACK

I couldn't take your money, Miss Medda.

LES

You pictured that?

DAVEY

It's really good!

MEDDA

Your friend is quite an artist.

JACK

Don't get carried away. It's a bunch of trees.

MEDDA

The boy's got natural aptitude.

LES

Geez. I never knew no one with a aptitude!

PAT

Miss Medda, you're on!

MEDDA

Kids, stay as long as you like. You're with Medda now! (to the BOWERY BRIGADE)
Ready, ladies?

BOWERY BRIGADE

Break a leg, Miss Medda!

LES

Why did they tell her to break a leg? Don't they like her?

CRUTCHIE

It means "good luck" in theater lingo.

JACK

You can watch from backstage. I'm goin' out front.

(JACK goes into the house as PAT announces the act.)

PAT

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the magnificent Medda Larkin and her Bowery Brigade!

(DAVEY and LES watch from the wings while MEDDA and the BOWERY BRIGADE take the stage. JACK finds a seat in the house, right next to KATHERINE, who sits reviewing the show for the newspaper. He takes a pencil and paper from his pocket and starts drawing the dancers.)

MEDDA

Well, hi-dee-ho, everybody! Welcome to my theater. Yessiree, it's a brand new century with a brand new set of rules for women, and the Brigade and I are gonna tell you all about them. Maestro, if you please!