

**ACT ONE****SCENE 1: CHERRY TREE LANE – Rooftop, Street, Parlor**

#1 – Prologue

Bert

*(London, 1910. It's autumn: a dark sky, scudding clouds. A landscape of early twentieth-century rooftops is spread out before us. BERT, a chimney sweep, enters and addresses the audience.)*

**BERT**

WIND'S IN THE EAST, THERE'S A MIST COMING IN,  
LIKE SOMETHING IS BREWIN' AND 'BOUT TO BEGIN.  
CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON WHAT LIES IN STORE,  
BUT I FEEL WHAT'S TO 'APPEN ALL 'APPENED BEFORE.

*(GEORGE BANKS appears out of the forest of chimneys, as does his wife, WINIFRED, and their two children, JANE and MICHAEL. All of them, in their different ways, are disconnected and alone.)*

A FATHER, A MOTHER, A DAUGHTER, A SON –  
THE THREADS OF THEIR LIVES ARE ALL RAVELLING UNDONE.  
SOMETHING IS NEEDED TO TWIST THEM AS TIGHT  
AS A STRING YOU MIGHT USE WHEN YOU'RE FLYING A KITE.  
CHIM CHIMINEY, CHIM CHIM CHER-EE CHIM CHER-OO.

*(MICHAEL and JANE rush around with a makeshift kite, pursued by their nanny, KATIE NANNA.)*

**MICHAEL**

Hurry up, Jane! Let's run!

**KATIE NANNA**

Come back here, you little blighters! You've got to do your lessons.

**MICHAEL**

I can't do my lessons if I'm flying a kite!

**JANE**

And you can't make us. You're only our nanny.

*(The CHILDREN stamp on KATIE NANNA's foot and succeed in losing her. Their freedom is short-lived as they run straight into the local POLICEMAN.)*

**POLICEMAN**

Oi! Not you two again! Come along home! Oi – come here!

*(The POLICEMAN takes the CHILDREN away as BERT stops in front of No. 17 Cherry Tree Lane. MISS LARK is coming the other way with WILLOUGHBY, her lap-dog.)*

**MISS LARK**

Good morning, Bert

**BERT**

Mornin' Miss Lark, and how's little Willoughby today?

**MISS LARK**

Oh, very well, thank you, Bert.

*(WILLOUGHBY snaps at BERT.)*

Willoughby!

*(ADMIRAL BOOM enters, carrying some binoculars.)*

**ADMIRAL BOOM**

By Jove, is that the beauteous Miss Lark I spy on the horizon?

**MISS LARK**

Oh Admiral...

*(WILLOUGHBY barks.)*

Willoughby!

*(MISS LARK giggles coquettishly and continues on her way. ADMIRAL BOOM crosses to where BERT has been watching.)*

**BERT**

Mornin', Admiral. How's it looking?

**ADMIRAL BOOM**

Dark clouds gathering at No. 17 — storm warning's overdue.

*(ADMIRAL BOOM exits.)*

**BERT**

OF ALL LONDON'S BY-WAYS WHERE I DOFF MY CAP,  
THIS ONE'S THE HARDEST TO FIND ON A MAP.  
CHERRY TREE LANE, AS SWEET AS A SONG,  
BUT THE NANNIES WHO COME HERE, THEY DON'T STAY FOR LONG.  
CHIM CHIMINEY, CHIM CHIM CHER-EE CHIM CHER-OO.

#2 – Cherry Tree Lane (Part 1)

Mrs. Brill, Winifred, Robertson Ay,  
Jane, Michael, George

*(BERT snaps his fingers and the interior of the house bursts into life. It's chaos: KATIE NANNA storms toward the door with her packed bags.)*

**MRS. BRILL**

Katie Nanna! Katie Nanna!

**KATIE NANNA**

Those little beasts have run away from me for the last time!

*(MRS. BRILL, the cook/housekeeper, bustles after KATIE NANNA. The house boy, ROBERTSON AY, follows them.)*

**MRS. BRILL**

And who gets stuck with the children with no nanny in the house? Me! That's who!

**KATIE NANNA**

I've said my say, Mrs. Brill, and that's all I'll say. I've done with this house forever!

**MRS. BRILL**

Well, good riddance, then. And mind you don't stumble on your way out!

*(KATIE NANNA stumbles. MICHAEL and JANE have run into the house. WINIFRED BANKS has appeared in time to witness KATIE NANNA storming out.)*

**WINIFRED**

Katie Nanna? Where are you going? Katie Nanna!?

**MRS. BRILL**

KATIE NANNA'S GONE, AND IS IT ANY WONDER,  
DRIVEN HALF DEMENTED BY YOUR CHILDREN'S PRANKS?

**WINIFRED**

DO YOU REALLY THINK I MADE ANOTHER BLUNDER?  
WHAT ON EARTH AM I TO SAY TO MR. BANKS?

*(knocks at the study door)*

GEORGE, DEAR,  
I'M FEELING SO BEREFT, DEAR.  
ANOTHER NANNY'S LEFT, DEAR.  
EVERY NANNY GOES.  
WE'RE UNLUCKY I SUPPOSE.