

Sonny the Soup Sipper

By

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with adaptations by Jim Pappas

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Description of Characters and Performance

Technique used:

Although the play can use as many as eight actors it was originally done by Bill and Pete using 1 narrator and 2 actors. The two actors had a hat tree with several hats which they changed with each switch of character.

They used, and we suggest you do the same, the off-stage focus technique of Reader's Theatre. (See our brief description). Each hat change was accompanied by a vocal, accentual and physical change. There was also an electric piano used for scene changes, sound effects, etc. Such insertions are left to your creative imagination. With a larger cast most of the sound effects can be done live. Otherwise a recording or sampling keyboard is useful.

Mimes are copiously used in our productions and are quite effective.

We used no props other than hat & dress. Lighting can be used to set the mood but is optional.

Cast can be all male, all female, or mixed. Change pronouns to suit.

Sonny: Young, clean (white hat) pure. Impressionable, open, dissatisfied with the rat race.

Kelly: Same type as Sonny but more of a daredevil, leader, mischievous, rough and ready, big dreamer. Not enough ability to make his dreams come true. Not concerned about work. Western accent (cowboy hat).

Tommy: Follower, same basic type as Sonny, and Kelly. Hick accent (cow-boyish hat).

Micky: Dumb, not a thinker, gullible. A perfect drone.

Black Angel: (Black hat & coat) Devil's advocate.

White Angel: (White hat & coat) God's Angel

Phillip: Scandinavian accent. Hard worker. Personable, musician, artistic, (Ski hat).

Hans: Old man, German accent, hunch back, time-worn. Bitter. (French Beret).

This script is free as described in the honorary contract. However, there is provision for you to donate to my ministry if you should so feel impressed. The amount is entirely up to you. I wish you blessings and I hope you enjoy the script.

Jim Pappas

Sonny The Soup Sipper

(Introduction accompanied by sound effects of a giant soup factory such as motors, belts, clanging cans, pouring and bubbling liquids, etc.)

Scene I

Narrator: In the beginning there was the Boss. He created the Sovereign Soup Company. The Boss had the ultimate administration in His company, the chief assistant being His vice president. Now, no one knows exactly when, or even why, but one day the vice president rebelled. He took part of the working force into his own administration and then rebuilt this particular soup factory complete with his own inferior decorating design. Being in control now, he also wanted to change his title. So he change it. No longer is he called Vice President. He is now called the President of Vice.

In case you hadn't noticed-you are in his rebel soup factory. Like everyone around you, your overalls are covered with grease and old soup. You can never get clean.

Look around you; Have you met your fellow workers yet? Meet Tommy the Tub Tipper. He tips the tall tubs. From him the soup is forwarded to the various facets of the factory's facilities.

After the commodity has been consumed, the empty cans are catered to Kelly the Can Crusher, who, of course, completely crushes the cans enabling them to be recycled. But the person everyone depends on most is Sonny. Sonny The Soup Sipper. Sonny sips soup sort of systematically seeking satisfactory soup. Of course if it's not, that is to say somewhat substandard, Sonny simply sets the silly substandard soup aside.

Now these are just three of your fellow workers. All of you who work here were born in this greasy factory. You live here, and you will die here unless . . .(interrupted by Tommy's first line. The sounds of the factory get louder)

Tommy: Hey! Let's get some more tubs over here.

(Mime pulling lever down to tip the tub into passing cans and muttering to himself)

I don't know that they'd do without me around here. Seems that nobody is worth their pay anymore. Wages keep going up and work keeps going down.

Meanwhile Kelly has been crushing cans-mime actions of the crushing and the cans being carried away on the conveyor belt)

Kelly: Yeah, they sure do. Pity. Real pity.

Tommy: You know, Kelly, it's really lucky that we, two good friends, get to work together in the same department of this huge soup factory.

Kelly: Yeah, fate, it's gotta' be.

Tommy: You know, I really don't know that they'd do without me around here. From me all the soup goes to every other part of the factory. It all starts right here!

Kelly: And Me! What would they do without me? All these cans would be piled up so high that nobody could even walk around in this factory.

Tommy: Those turkeys out there think the whole factory revolves around them.

Kelly: Well I've got news for them. It doesn't!

Cast: IT REVOLVES AROUND ME!! (They both react with surprise to that and then return to their own work pretending not to have heard)

Tommy: It's about time you brought another tub over here!

Kelly: Just stack them cans there. I'll crush them in a minute. Man! Is there ever an end?

SCENE II

Sonny: Hey Micky! Come over here a minute would you? This belt sounds squeaky.

Micky: Yo kay, Sonny. They don't call me Micky the Mechanic for nuthin'.

Sonny: Here, listen. Can you hear that squeak? It's driving me crazy!

Micky: Hear it! I bet they can hear it on the outside the factory walls.

Sonny: Yeah. If there is anything outside of these dirty, greasy walls. Look at them. Four dull, high, cold, damp walls! No doors, no windows, no nothing except for this endless belt and a lot of clanking noise and nothing! Just nothing!

Micky: Just remember what the President of Vice says, Sonny. "You only get out of something what you put into it."

Sonny: Get out of something! I'll tell you what, Micky. I'd like to get out of this place. I'm sick of being dirty.

Micky: Hey! Like the V-Pres sez - "Four walls do not a prison make."

Sonny: Are you happy with this life here, Micky? I'm not. I want to go someplace where it's clean and warm with color and beauty and fresh air.

Micky: Hey! What'a'ya gonna do, man? Fly up through the ceiling? You know there ain't no doors or windows.

Sonny: (Looking up) There is the one window.

Micky: (Looking up) How do we know it's a window? Oh, sure, light comes from there and lights up the whole factory, but is it really a window? Or is it just a giant square light bulb? I mean, how do we know?

Voice: Hey! Mickey!

Mickey: (Looking off stage) Yeah, yeah, I'm coming! Just hold your soup can. There's always something to fix. Micky the mechanic. Micky the mechanic. That's all I ever hear!

Sonny: (Thoughtfully) Micky?

Micky: Yeah?

Sonny: I'm going up there someday. (Keeps looking up)

Micky: (Dismisses the idea with a wave of the hand)

Yeah, sure, Sonny.

SCENE III

Boy: (Shouting as he crosses the stage) Hey ya, hey ya, hey ya! Read all about it. Boss makes same offer again! Get yer Sovereign Soup Sentinal right here!! Hey ya, hey ya, hey ya, Read all about it . . .

Sonny: Hey boy! Where'd you get those papers?

News Boy: Oh, they just fell through that window again.

Sonny: How much?

News Boy: Just three labels off yer number ten can.

Sonny: O.K., here.

News Boy: (Exit on line) Hey ya, hey ya, hey ya! Boss makes same fantastic offer again! Read all about it. Hey ya, hey ya, hey ya . . .

Sonny: (Reading Paper) "Dear Children." He always calls us that. I wonder why? It kind of makes me feel warm inside.

Black Angel: (To audience) Yuck!

Sonny: "This message is to remind you once again that no one need continue to be a slave in the Soup Factory. I will gladly take you out of the futile work of the factory and give you a more joyful and abundant life."

Black Angel: (To audience) I think I'm getting ill.

Sonny: Boy! Wouldn't that be great! "All you have to do is to acknowledge that you are dirty and that you are ready to be cleansed." Hmmph! He says that every time-it seems so simple.

Black Angel: Don't tell me you're gonna believe that old line!

Sonny: Too simple. Besides, I've heard it over and over again since I was a kid. I wonder if it's really true?

White Angel: Come on! You're smarter than that!

Sonny: I suppose if I'd just use my brains I'd see that it's just too good to be true. Course, it might be true . .

Black Angel: It's not!

Sonny: Ya know, it really could be true . . .

Black Angel: It's not, I tell ya! It's not!

Sonny: Aw, it's probably not. Besides, it sounds so real what the President of Vice says.

Black Angel: Now you're thinking kid. You just stick with us and someday we'll bust through these walls. And when we break through to the outside you'll see there's warmth and beauty and fresh air.

Sonny: He says if we stick with him, that someday we'll break through these walls and see all our dreams come true. That's what I want! I want to be freed from the dull mindless routine of this crummy soup factory.

(Black Angel walks off quite pleased with himself. Enter White Angel who is eyed suspiciously. Black Angel comes back and during the next few lines sends punctured,

booby-trapped, or otherwise dangerous cans down the line to Sonny. The White Angel renders all of the dangers safe for Sonny, even putting himself into personal danger)

White Angel: Doesn't the light make you feel good, Sonny?

Sonny: Boy, I sure enjoy that warm light.

White Angel: Wouldn't you like to take the Boss's offer and get out of the darkness of this place?

Sonny: (Picks up newspaper again) Man! I feel really confused. The Boss tells me one way to get out of here and the President of Vice tells me another. One tells me to just confess and believe and the other tells me work and achieve. But neither of them has come through yet.

White Angel: That's because you haven't said that you're ready yet!

Sonny: The Boss says to just say I'm ready. But I'm not ready to say I'm ready! And yet, there doesn't seem to be any way to break through these walls ourselves either. I'd like to believe the Boss. They say He's a good man. I just wish I knew that He really did care for me. If I could just see some evidence . . .

White Angel: Evidence! (All this time the angel has been protecting Sonny but Sonny never noticed. SFX Noon Whistle)

Sonny: Say! Is that the quitting whistle already? I can't believe how quick the time has gone. And this has actually been an easy day. I'm not tired and I didn't even cut my hands on those funny punctured cans like I usually do.

SCENE IV

Kelly: Hey, Tommy. Have you noticed anything different about Sonny lately?

Tommy: Yeah. He's been acting pretty weird since the last edition of the paper fell through that window.

Kelly: All he talks about all the time is that light up there. If you ask me He's really getting fanatical.

Tommy: Well, I guess everybody's wondered about that light from time to time. But I don't have time to sit around and try and figure out what that light thing's all about.

Kelly: Well somebody's gonna figure it out, Tommy.

Tommy: Oh, yeah? Who?

Kelly: Me!

Tommy: You? Now how you gonna do that?

Kelly: Well, I'll let you in on a little plan if you can keep a secret.

Tommy: Oh yeah? You gotta plan? Hey, you know a good friend can keep a secret. You bet, buddy.

Kelly: (Motions for Tommy to come close for a secret) Well, I've been figuring a bit, see.

Tommy: Yeah?

Kelly: Now I know it's a long ways up to that there light, see . . .

Tommy: Yeah, yeah.

Kelly: . . . and I've heard the stories and read the paper just as much as you have.

Tommy: Yeah, I know.

Kelly: . . . and it seems just as hoaky to me as it does to you. So . . . Ta da!

Tommy: Ta da, what?

Kelly: Here's what I'm planning on doing. I've been sneaking a few of the cans from the crusher day by day.

Tommy: You have?

Kelly: Yeah, I have.

Tommy: What for?

Kelly: Well, instead of crushing them I've been welding them together and building myself this huge scaffold over in one of the vacant corners of the factory.

Tommy: What for?

Kelly: Just a minute and I'll tell ya. I've been figuring that in just a few more shifts I'll have enough scaffolding to reach clear up to that light in the ceiling.

Tommy: Clear all the way up there? Man!

Kelly: You bet! I figure I'm gonna settle it once and for all what's really up there. I'm sure I'll prove all those dreamers wrong who think there's something better up there. Maybe I'll even help out our old buddy, Sonny.

Tommy: Wow! Sounds terrific. You gonna let a good buddy in on the operation?

Kelly: You Bet! I figure to have it ready in a couple of weeks. Meet me here on Friday the 13th at 3:00 A.M. sharp!

Tommy: You got it pal!

SCENE V

Kelly: There! That looks pretty good to me. I just hope that one joint holds up.

Tommy: It uh . . . looks sort of wobbly to me, Kelly. Maybe we'd better wait.

Kelly: Aw, it's O.K. I don't have time for petty details. 'Sides, people will start coming for work soon so we best get a move on. You wanna go up with me?

Tommy: (Mime an inspection of the weak joint) Uh, I uh... No. I think I'd better stay down here and steady it for ya.

Kelly: O.K. But it's gonna be excitin'! (Mime-starts to climb and looks down) Whoa!
Tommy! You wouldn't believe how the factory looks from here!

Tommy: (Looks around himself) It looks exactly the same from here.

Kelly: No! Not from there, from here!

Tommy: That's what I said. Hey, You'd better be careful, Kel. That thing is a swayin' some.

(The Black Angel appears - lights a cutting torch and begins to cut one of the legs out from under Kelly. Neither of the other two can see him)

Kelly: So steady it. Say! I still can't get over the view.

Tommy:(SFX of metal bending and creaking) Kelly! You'd better stop climbing! That joint is starting to crack and bend. You'd better come back down quick! Oh no!!! (Kelly sways and falls to the ground. The White Angel catches him and eases his fall)

Tommy: Kelly! Kelly! You alright? Say something to me . . . Come on, buddy, say something.

Kelly: (Half conscious-mumbles) Fresh air!

Tommy: Huh? What's that, Kel?

Kelly: It was easier to breath up there.

Tommy: Hey, take it easy, pal. You had a real tumble on your head.

Kelly: I'm O.K., Tommy, really. Ya know, the air was actually fresher up there.

Tommy: Yeah, sure pal. I'm sure it was.

Kelly: No really! No more burnt soup smell, no more grease odor. It was clean and clear and . . .

Tommy: And what?

Kelly: Well, yer not gonna believe this, but I think I smelled flowers!

Tommy: Flowers! Come on, Kelly. You know as well as I do that flowers are an extinct species. And take it from me, pal, fossils don't have no smell.

Kelly: No, Tommy. I saw something brighter than here.

Tommy: Sure, sure. What you saw was stars when you bonked yer beanie, that's what. It's a wonder you're still alive after that fall.

Kelly: No, Tommy! I know what I saw and felt. It was brighter than anything I've ever seen before. I just can't explain it. And! It was warm up there too!

Tommy: Yeah, sure. You're probably running a temperature or something. I better get you home. Man! That was some fall.

Scene VI

(Both Hans the Handyman and Phillip the Fiddler are carrying on action and monologue independantly of each other. Hans at a funeral home with his dead daughter-Phillip at the hospital waiting for the birth of his baby)

Hans: May I see the body? Yes, yes I am Hans the Handyman, her father. (Walks forward to body-looks down for a moment) Life is so short. It goes by so fast.

Phillip: (Pacing) Oh, how time drags. She's been in there a whole half hour.

Tommy: (Looking at the body) You have made her up well, coroner. She was wearing that dress on her first date, you knew.

Phillip: (Still pacing) They said any minute five minutes ago! Next time I think we'll find a faster hospital.

Hans: She didn't date much though. She worked hard. Too hard.

Phillip: (Still pacing) It's got to be a girl. I want a girl, my wife wants a girl. Everybody wants a girl. Oh, I'll be so disappointed if it's not. I want one of those cute little dolls that will be a knock out to every guy in the place.

Hans: I listened to what everybody said. I wanted the best for my daughter. I trained her to be the best in the factory. And this is the reward I get!

Phillip: (Stops pacing for a second) What if it's not a girl? (Resumes pacing) Oh, but it will be. I know it will be. It's just gotta be.

Hans: Yes, I will take the body. In the tradition of the factory workers I will bury her myself. (Mime of picking up the body and slowly walking towards where Phillip is)

Phillip: (He stops pacing and listens-someone has called his name). Yes? Yes, I am Phillip the Fiddler. It is? It's a boy! It's a boy! Oh, you don't know how much I wanted a boy. (Mime taking the baby from the nurse) Thank you. Oh! He is sooo cute! (Looking up the first person he sees is Hans) Hans! Hans! My Son!

Hans: (Hans motions to the dead body with his head) Phillip. My daughter.

Phillip: Oh, Hans. I'm. . . so sorry.

Hans: I am happy for you.

Phillip: How did it happen?

Hans: She died from overwork. She came back to our cell last night more exhausted than ever. I called the Dr. but he had so many cases to see that it was late when he came. Too late.

Phillip: Oh, I'm sorry.

Hans: When he saw her he said she was just like all the others. Worn out. He told me there was no hope.

Phillip: I'm sorry, Hans. Really sorry.

Hans: (Bitterly) She worked! She worked harder than anyone. That's what they ask in this factory if you want to get ahead. But look what it gets you! Death! That's what! Death!
(Softer) Choose something better for your little one, Phillip.

Phillip: (Looking down at the baby) I had hoped that she, or rather he, would carry on my work of entertaining the factory workers. They say my fiddle can make a statue smile.

Hans: Even your fiddle cannot comfort me now, Phillip. But even if it could, what about when you stop playing? Who would comfort me then?

Phillip: I don't know, Hans.

Hans: Nor do I. I find no comfort or peace inside of me. Only in things outside of myself that do not last. But when the music stops? Then What?

Hans: It is true, Phillip. The work is empty. Without the praise it would be nothing. But what else is there for my son?

Hans: I'll tell you what to do. Don't believe the Vice President who tells you that hard work and wild weekends will make you happy. It is a lie. Do what you have to to stay alive and take time for those you love. No more!

Phillip: There must be something better, Hans.

Hans: (Bitterly) No! There is nothing better! There is nothing here but work! Work! Work! There is nothing else, Phillip . . . except . . .

Phillip: Except what, Hans?

Hans: It is too late for my daughter, but, there is the Boss's offer. (He looks up wistfully at the window)

Phillip: (Looks at the dead daughter, at his son, then up at the window) But Hans? Is it true?

Hans: I don't know. If it is not then there is nothing!

Scene VII

White Angel has hands together praying while Black Angel is messing up labels on cans)

Black Angel: What in the soup factory are you doing?

White Angel: I'm talking to the Boss. What in the soup factory do you think I'm doing?

Black Angel: I have no idea. It looks like you're warming up your hands or something. What are you talking to Him about?

White Angel: Sonny.

Black Angel: Yeah? So what about him?

White Angel: He was just telling me how much He loves Sonny, like He does all the workers.

Black Angel: Yeah? Well the President of Vice likes him too cuz He's a good worker. So what's new? (Returns to messing up labels)

White Angel: What are you doing with those labels?

Black Angel: Oh, I'm just having a little fun doing some switching here and there. I've put the Split Pea labels on the Tomata cans and the Tomata labels on the Potata cans. It's a riot to watch the Anderson Family sit down to open up a can of Split Pea soup for supper and find Tomata. It busts me up!

White Angel: But Sonny gets blamed for all of that doesn't he?

Black Angel: Yea, But he can handle it. Remember, He's a good worker. (He laughs) Hey, you hear anything more from the boss? Ha ha ha.