

The Pictures that Changed Hearts

Characters:

Child Mine Worker

Child Factory Worker

Child Apple Seller

National Child Labor Committee Member

Lewis Hine

President of the United States

Scene 1

Each child laborer comes out on the stage alone and says his or her line, then leaves the stage.

Child Mine Worker: I work in a coal mine. It is dark and dirty. It's hard to breathe. I don't have time to play.

Child Factory Worker: I work in a factory from early morning until late at night. I work with large, fast-moving machines. I don't have time to go to school.

Child Apple Seller: I sell apples on the city street. I walk for miles and miles. My feet hurt. I'm always hungry. I wish I could eat all my apples. I don't have enough time to rest.

Scene 2

National Child Labor Committee Member and Lewis Hine enter the stage.

National Child Labor Committee Member: Mr. Hine, children are working from dawn to dusk. Children need to play, rest, and learn. We must help them. You take beautiful pictures. Pictures of working children might change hearts. Can you help?

Lewis Hine: I would be honored to help!

Scene 3

The three child laborers go to different parts of the stage and mime their work. Lewis Hine approaches each of them. In mime [silently], he goes in turn to each child and asks to take their picture. They turn to him and stand still, but do not smile. Lewis Hine mimes taking a picture.

Lewis Hine exits. Children continue miming their work for a minute, then exit one at a time.

Scene 4

National Child Labor Committee Member walks onstage and pretends to type on a typewriter. After a moment, Lewis Hine enters. National Child Labor Committee Member looks up and shakes his hand.

Lewis Hine: You would never dream what I saw. Here are my photos. I remember each one of these tired faces. *(He mimes handing National Child Labor Committee Member a folder of pictures.)*

National Child Labor Committee Member *(miming looking through the pictures)*: This is wonderful work. This will surely change hearts!

Lewis Hine and National Child Labor Committee Member exit.

Scene 5

Lewis Hine, National Child Labor Committee Member, and three child laborers enter the stage holding hands. They stand in a line holding hands, facing the audience.

National Child Labor Committee Member: This is the day!

Lewis Hine: We have won!

President enters and walks in front of the line.

President *(speaking grandly, with large hand gestures)*: The government must protect those who cannot protect themselves. Today I have signed a law to protect children from overwork. They will have time to play! They will have time to rest! They will have time to go to school.

All others cheer. President joins the line holding hands. All raise hands and cheer again. Then the line holding hands bows to end the play. All exit.