

## 'CRY-BABY: The Musical' by Mark O'Donnell & Thomas Meehan

**MRS. VW:** It all started years ago. World War Two. December, nineteen forty three. My best friends were Fred and Adele Blandish. Baldwin's parents. They ran the biggest factory in town, the Blandish Bootworks. They had converted from making bedroom slippers and baby booties to making soldiers' boots for the war effort.

I knew they were using inferior materials - cardboard and shellac - and charging the government for leather, making huge profits. But I looked the other way. We were in the same social circle. Then the bad news started coming in from overseas. Our brave fighting boys were falling victim to mysterious injuries — fallen arches, bunions, corns... even twisted ankles! There was an inquiry and the factory was to be inspected. A week before the inspection was to take place, the factory burned to the ground, killing the watchman. It was Christmas Eve. The Blandishes were due at my home for carols and figgy pudding. They arrived late, reeking of gasoline. I didn't think anything of it at the time. 'With the war rationing people drank anything they could get their hands on. Later, when the investigation began, Fred and Adele begged me to say they'd been at my house all evening. It was wartime and I felt I had to stand shoulder to shoulder with my peers and class against the threat of anarchy and revolution. The police suspected a poor young pacifist couple who had demonstrated against vi-Far outside the factory the day before. Will and Ariel Walker - I didn't know them. Fred Blandish testified that the Walkers had threatened to burn the factory down. And, God forgive me, I confirmed Fred's alibi. I needed to believe him. The Walkers were convicted of arson, murder, and treason. I realize now they were innocent.