

THE WHIZ KID

Synopsis

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In 1931, New York City, **JOHN MCCLELLAN**, an unemployed businessman, finds himself struggling to support his wife and two kids, **BOBBY** and **TEDDY**. After a less than fruitful day selling apples, John, in a desperate state, decides to go home and kick his older son Bobby out in order to have fewer mouths to feed.

Bobby leaves, but along comes Teddy, determined to stay by his brother's side. The two set out to find food, but the harsh reality of the big city hits, and the brothers come up with a plan to escape to California, where life is supposed to be much better.

In Harlem, they meet another young boy, a black illiterate shoeshiner named **WILL LIVINGSTON**. Will joins the brothers, in their search for a more stable income, and uses his knowledge of the train system to help them navigate.

During their first train ride, they meet **H.W. DAVIES**, a charismatic young thief, who knows his way around the country. Davies gives the boys a bit of a hard time, but quickly drops his façade, offering to join the boys and help them "make some real money". This puts him at odd with Bobby, who insists they should work honestly.

The boys find some work in Cimarron County, Oklahoma but a huge dust storm nearly kills them.

Following Davies' lead, Bobby, Teddy, and Will arrive in Texas, only to be stopped by "bulls" (private detectives hired to keep hobos from riding trains). The bulls shoot at the boys and chase them out of the train. Davies hurts one of the bulls badly by kicking him in the balls.

While in Texas, they watch the traveling circus, the Noah's Ark, parading on the streets. Davies comes up with the great idea of stealing from the circus to get some cash for the journey. The boys assist him with his plan and succeed. They run off to the train station. The "bulls" return again, this time with a stronger force. The boys are caught and taken to the police station.

When the boys are questioned by the Chief Police, Davies refuses to back down and his defiance gets him accidentally killed. Bobby, Will, and Teddy are thrown into jail.

The next morning, **FATHER NOAH**- the circus owner comes to the station to report his stolen money. When he hears the boy's story, he decides to pay for their release and offers them a chance to work for his circus.

Bobby becomes fascinated with the circus life and has a crush on Father Noah's daughter, **MARIE**, which leads him to become interested in performing for the Ark. After an act of bravery, saving Marie from three rogue lions, Bobby is finally offered the professional training. Teddy and Will also get the chance to do it, but Bobby proves himself to be the most talented, gaining fame and money, as the Whiz Kid, with his famous and deadly Wire Act. While Teddy hates the circus life and does poorly and is forbidden to ever perform again.

After a year on the road, Bobby decides to take some time off and visit his parents. Excited to finally be of some financial help, he arrives home, without Teddy, only to find out, from the neighbor, that his mother passed away due to illness, and his father committed suicide.

Bobby comes back to the circus and withholds the bad news from Teddy. During his performance, Bobby loses his balance and falls to his death. Teddy mourns his brother and vows to carry on his legacy as the New Whiz Kid.



Noah