

Sing “Merry Christmas” (sample of script)

by Sandi Rebert

Setting: during the Great Depression (1931) in a small Midwestern town

Scene 1

**Willoughby’s Store
Early in the Morning**

Kyle and his little boy, Joey, enter Mr. Willoughby’s store. Mr. Willoughby is a sick, grumpy old man. He should cough occasionally and act like he doesn’t feel well.

Mr. Willoughby: *(eying them suspiciously)* I ain’t givin’ no credit, if that’s what you want.

Kyle lets go of Joey’s hand and Joey walks over to the display of toys.

Kyle: No, sir, that’s not why I’m here.

Mr. Willoughby: You got cash?

Kyle: No, sir.

Mr. Willoughby: *(under his breath)* I didn’t think so. *(louder)* Get out of my store.

Kyle: *(trying to stay calm)* Mr. Willoughby, you’ve got a sign in your window that says you’re hirin’.

Mr. Willoughby: Doesn’t mean I’m hirin’ the likes of you.

Kyle: *(sighs, then gets up his courage to say more)* Please, Mr. Willoughby, these are hard times. Lots of people live in tar-paper shacks.

Mr. Willoughby: But no one else’s “shack” is next to my store.

Kyle: It was the only piece of land I could find to rent. The lot’s too small for a

larger house or another store. If I could get a job, I could afford to build something better.

Mr. Willoughby: *(coughing some)* I've been under the weather a little lately. I'm only hirin' someone to help out till I get to feelin' better. That won't give you enough money to build something better.

Kyle: *(earnestly)* It would at least put some food on our table. Mr. Willoughby, I have a family to take care of.

Mr. Willoughby: You should have thought of that before you moved here.

Kyle: *(under his breath)* You sound like my wife.

Mr. Willoughby: What was that?

Kyle: *(dejectedly)* Nothing—sir.

Mr. Willoughby: *(noticing that Joey has picked up a teddy bear from the table)* Put that down, little boy. You don't have the money to buy that.

Kyle: *(under his breath)* Or anything else. *(Sees Mr. Willoughby eyeing him angrily. Embarrassed, he speaks softly)* Put it down, Joey.

Joey: Daddy, can I have this Teddy Bear for Christmas?

Kyle: No.

Joey: But he needs me!

Mr. Willoughby walks over to the table.

Kyle: *(crosses to him, looks at Mr. Willoughby then gets on one knee, firmly but gently takes the Teddy Bear from his hand and places it on the table)* You have to put this back, Joey. Don't touch anything else, understand?

Joey: All right, Daddy. But I'm going to pray and ask Jesus to give me that Teddy

Bear for Christmas.

Kyle says nothing.

Joey: That's good, isn't it, Daddy? You tell me to pray about everything, right?

Kyle: *(very embarrassed, looks squeamishly up at Mr. Willoughby)* Right. *(gets up slowly, takes Joey's hand, speaks softly)* Mr. Willoughby, if you'd just exchange some work for food.

Mr. Willoughby: The answer is no!

Kyle: *(softly, matter-of-factly)* So you'll starve us out.

Mr. Willoughby: *(noticing that other customers are taking in their conversation, speaks under his breath, emphatically)* I told you to get out of my store!

Kyle: *(has difficulty speaking)* So you did, sir.
(to Joey) Come on, Joey.

Joey: *(looking wistfully back at the Teddy Bear)* I've already asked Jesus to give me that Teddy Bear, Daddy.

Mr. Willoughby eyes Kyle one last time. Kyle hangs his head and exits with Joey.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Willoughby. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Treating that young man and his little boy like that.

Mr. Willoughby: I don't want a Hooverville next door.

Mr. Smith: A shanty town? Oh, I hardly think...

Miss Perkins: *(shaking her head sadly)* If only president Hoover and congress would do something to help those poor people.

Mr. Smith: *(to Miss Perkins)* Well, I'm not going to get into politics, but *(to Mr. Willoughby)* you don't need to worry about it. There's no room for a bunch

of shacks next door. Just one.

Mr. Willoughby: One too many!

Mrs. Carlton: Where's your Christmas spirit?

Mr. Willoughby: My what?

Mrs. Carlton: Your Christmas spirit!

Mr. Willoughby: Christmas is several weeks away. And you... (*pointing to Mr. Smith, Miss Perkins, and Mrs. Carlton*) were eavesdropping.

Miss Perkins: (*sheepishly*) Well, it would have been next to impossible not to hear your conversation.

Mr. Smith: You must be some sort of Scrooge.

Mr. Willoughby: (*offended*) I am not. The rest of the shop keepers on this street aren't too thrilled about them living there either.

Mrs. Carlton: (*ignoring his remark*) My heart starts singing "Merry Christmas" right around the beginning of October.

Mr. Willoughby: October! That's ridiculous!

Miss Perkins: (*chuckling*) I start singing Christmas carols in August.

Mr. Willoughby: August?! (*shakes his head in disbelief*)

Mr. Morgan: Mr. Willoughby's right. In case you hadn't noticed, there's a depression going on in this country. Not much to sing about these days.

Mr. Smith: Oh, you and Mr. Willoughby are both so wrong. It's always the right time to sing, "Merry Christmas!"

Miss Perkins and Mrs. Carlton nod in agreement. Mr. Willoughby and Mr. Morgan

look at each other and shrug their shoulders.

SONG: SING MERRY CHRISTMAS (*choir enters from different parts of the set*)

Lights down on scene

Scene 2
Kyle and Amy's House
Later that evening

Kyle and Joey enter; they are very tired.
Amy looks at Kyle angrily.

Kyle: *(Noticing his wife's angry look)* Joey, take the coats into the other room.

Joey exits.

Amy: Were you able to find work?

Kyle: *(dejectedly)* No.

Amy: Were you able to get any bread?

Kyle: No, they were out by the time we got to the front of the line. We did have lunch at the soup kitchen.

Wife: Nice. You walked all the way to the next town and came back with nothing.

Kyle: I'm sorry, Amy. I was really hoping...

Amy: I didn't have any lunch. If you'd taken my advice, we would be living in that town where there's already a Hooverville and a soup kitchen. Instead, you have to walk 7 miles one way to get food.

Kyle: You know why I chose not to live there, Amy. Those shantytowns are full of diseases. I was thinking of you and Joey. I'm sorry. I was hoping I could get some bread. We stood in line for two hours.

Amy: If only we hadn't come to this God-forsaken place!

Kyle: God hasn't forsaken us, Amy.

Amy: *(accusingly)* Hasn't He? You absolutely amaze me, Kyle. How can you still

trust in a God that would starve you to death?!

Kyle: We aren't starving—not yet.

Amy: You have a little boy in there... (*points to other room*) a little boy whose tummy is empty. Empty because of you and your God!

Kyle: Amy, please. I know things have been rough.

Amy: Rough! I married you for better or for worse. And I meant it. But I didn't realize at the time that my husband would be so foolish as to leave his inheritance in the investments his father had made—and lose it all!

Kyle: How was I to know the stock market was going to crash?! How could I...?

Amy: You may not have known but the God you claim to “trust” in should have known. Shouldn't He?

Kyle: Of course He knew.

Amy: Then how could He have “led” you to leave your money in a system that would fail? Didn't you tell me, at that time, you felt it was “God's will” for you to leave it there?

Kyle: Yes, yes, at the time, I thought he did.

Amy: You *thought* He did. And then you lost your job.

Kyle: I had no way of...

Amy: (*cutting him off*) And the creditors came knocking on our door, and we were forced to move out west where we could raise our child on a farm—to a dust bowl of opportunity!

Kyle: God supplied the money to pay off the creditors and buy the farm. I had no way of knowing there would be a drought.

Amy: No, but your God knew. Then we lost the farm and came here to this—this tar-paper castle! *(looks around at the dismal walls)*

Kyle: At least we have a roof over our heads.

Amy: That's about all we have. And what will we be living in if we can't pay our rent this month on the scrap of land our castle sits on?

Joey: *(coming from the other room)* Mommy! I'm hungry! What are we having for supper?

Amy gives her husband a disdainful look.

Kyle: *(looks at his wife, then at Joey, tries to be cheerful)* It is supper time, isn't it?

Joey Nods

Kyle: Well, let's sit down and eat! *(starts to get plates, etc. out of a small cupboard and puts them on the table.)*

Amy: What are you doing?

Joey: *(looking at the empty plates, etc.)* Where's supper, Mommy?

Amy: Ask your father.

Joey looks at Kyle.

Kyle: *(trying to convince himself as well as the rest of the family)* God's going to give us our supper tonight.

Joey: *(wide-eyed)* He is?

Kyle: *(nods, as if trying to convince himself, then speaks confidently)* Yes, He is.

Amy looks away as Kyle prays.

Kyle: Father, you know our needs. Please, (*glances up at his wife*) please help us!
(*with more confidence*) Thank you for what you are going to provide. Amen!

Joey: Do you think God will give me that Teddy Bear for Christmas? That's what I want—the one I saw in Mr. Willoughby's store.

Kyle: I can't answer that, Joey. God hasn't promised to give us everything we want. But He has promised to meet the *needs* of those who (*pauses, looking at Amy*) love Him.

Amy rolls her eyes.

Joey: I need a Teddy Bear.

Wife: You asked *Mr. Willoughby* for a job?

Kyle: (*nods*) He had a sign in the front window. Said he was hiring.

Amy: But not you....

Kyle: (*breathes deeply, shakes his head*) No.

Amy: (*under her breath*) His name has to be Ebenezer.

Joey: (*having difficulty pronouncing it*) Eb—Ebe...

Amy: Ebenezer.

Joey: Ebenezer? That's his name? Ebenezer Willoughby?

Mrs. Willoughby enters and knocks on the door then opens it slowly. She is carrying a basket covered with a cloth. She notices them at the table, then the empty plates.

Mrs. Willoughby: I hope I'm not interrupting something.

Amy: (*slightly sarcastic, looking around at the empty table*) Oh, no, Mrs.

Willoughby. You're not interrupting anything at all!

Kyle looks over at his wife and sighs.

Mrs. Willoughby: *(sensing the uncomfortable situation)* Well, I'll only stay a minute. I wanted to bring you some...supper.

Amy looks incredulous. Joey's mouth gapes open. Kyle looks surprised, but pleased.

Mrs. Willoughby: My husband wasn't feeling well tonight. He couldn't eat, so I didn't feel much like eating either, so I thought I'd....

Kyle: Thank you, Mrs. Willoughby. *(in a stage whisper, with much feeling)* Thank you.

Mrs. Willoughby: You're more than welcome. I hope you enjoy it. Merry Christmas!

Kyle: Merry Christmas, Ma'am.

Amy: *(still bewildered)* Merry Christmas.

Mrs. Willoughby leaves.

Joey: Daddy, that wasn't God. That was Mrs. Willoughby.

Kyle: *(chuckling)* I know...

Joey: But you said that God would give us our supper and ...

Kyle: He did. God often uses other people as an answer to our prayers. I believe He led Mrs. Willoughby to bring us this food.

Amy: Then you must believe it was His will for Mr. Willoughby to get sick? Perhaps because "Old Scrooge" didn't give you a job?

Kyle: *(mumbling)* He was already sick.

Joey: Old Scrooge? I thought his name was Ebe—Ebene...

Amy: Ebenezar.

Joey: Ebenezer.

Kyle: *(looks away, trying to control his anger, starts to defend himself, thinks better of it, and says nothing; speaks to Joey)* Let's see what the Lord sent us!

Amy acts disgusted and exits into the other room.

Lights down on scene

Scenes 3-9 are here

Scene 10
Kyle and Amy's House
Christmas day

Amy, Kyle, and Joey are seated at the table preparing to eat Christmas dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby leave the shop. Mrs. Willoughby has a casserole dish. Mr. Willoughby has a package.

Kyle: *(looking up)* Lord, we thank you for this day—the day of the birth of Your Son, *our* Savior. *(glances over at Amy and smiles)*

There is a knock at the door.

Amy: Who could that be?

Kyle: *(opening the door)* Mrs. Willoughby. *(awkwardly, not sure of Mr. Willoughby's response.)* Mr. Willoughby. Glad you're feeling better, sir. Please—come in.

Mrs. Willoughby: Thank you. I was hoping you hadn't had supper yet. I wanted to bring this special dish my mother always made every Christmas. It's a Pennsylvania Dutch dish called corn pudding.

Amy: We actually moved here from Pennsylvania, well—with a short stay in Texas in between. My grandmother made that dish. I absolutely love it! You will stay and have supper with us?

Kyle grins sheepishly, nervous about Mr. Willoughby being there. Gives Amy a sideways look.

Mr. Willoughby: I saw the look you gave your wife, young man. You're not very excited to have us here, are you?

Kyle: Well, I...

Mr. Willoughby: You had a lot of audacity to think you could come and talk to me about something as personal as my eternal soul.

Kyle: I'm sorry, sir. I didn't mean to...

Mr. Willoughby: You didn't mean to tell me I was a lost sinner headed for hell?

Kyle: Well, yes, sir. What I mean is, I—I didn't mean to upset you.

Mrs. Willoughby: (*trying to calm her husband*) It's Christmas, dear. You promised not to bring it up. Besides, it was my idea... Please don't be angry with him.

Mr. Willoughby: I'm not angry. (*pauses*) I'm grateful.

Mrs. Willoughby and Kyle: What?

Mr. Willoughby: A man does a lot of thinking when he's that close to death's door. 'Course, I'm stubborn, so it took me a week's worth of thinking, but, well, last night I asked Christ to save me.

Mrs. Willoughby: (*hugging him*) Oh, Eb! I'm so happy! I've been praying for you for so long!

Mr. Willoughby: (*to Kyle*) I knew it took a lot of courage for you to talk to me – about anything! That meant something to me, and the fact that you were willing to risk your job. I wasn't about to give you the satisfaction of knowing that at the time, of course.

Kyle: (*taking a deep breath*) Well, I must say I am relieved, sir.

Mr. Willoughby: And...if you're willing. I'd like you to continue working for me at the store. For my health's sake, I need to slow down.

Kyle: I'd like that, sir. Thank you.

Mr. Willoughby: And one more thing...

Kyle: Yes, sir?

Mr. Willoughby: You've probably noticed the pile of lumber in the back of the storeroom.

Kyle: Yes, sir.

Mr. Willoughby: I purchased it a while back. We were planning to add on to our home, but we don't need a bigger place to take care of. But you... (*looks around*)

Kyle: You mean you'll let me work for it?

Mr. Willoughby: I mean I'm giving it to you.

Kyle: (*pauses*) I—I don't know what to say.

Mr. Willoughby: Say you'll use it to fix this place up.

Amy: (*elated*) Oh, thank you, Mr. Willoughby!

Mr. Willoughby: I've actually got selfish reasons; it's for my benefit as much as it is for yours.

Kyle: Thank you.

Mrs. Willoughby: There's one more thing we need to take care of. I don't want the dinner to get cold, but—this will just take a minute and it's very important, isn't it, Eb?

Mr. Willoughby: Oh, yes. I almost forgot. (*looks at the package he's holding*) My wife insisted we bring this. It's for—Joey, is it?

Amy: Yes.

Joey: (*with excitement*) For me?

Mr. Willoughby: (*holding the package back*) Can you guess what it is?

Joey: My teddy bear!

Mr. Willoughby: *(handing him the package)* Now, how did you know?

Joey: I told you he needed me, Daddy.

Kyle: That you did. You'd better thank Mr. Willoughby.

Joey: And God!

Kyle: *(smiling)* Yes, and God.

Joey: Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby! *(looking up while hugging the bear)*
Thank you, Lord! *(to all)* I'm going to name him—Ebe...Ebenezer after Mr.
Willoughby!

Kyle and Amy look embarrassed.

Kyle: *(softly)* Joey, what did Daddy tell you?

Joey: I didn't call him Mr. Scrooge, just Ebe—Ebe...

Amy: Ebenezer. *(quickly puts her hand over her mouth as she realizes what she said.)*

Mr. Willoughby: *(laughing, speaks to Joey)* How did you know my name?

Amy: You mean that really is your name?

Mr. Willoughby: Scrooge? No. Although some people called me that not long ago.

Mrs. Willoughby: But, his first name really is Ebenezer. I call him Eb for short.

All laugh.

Joey: *(hugging his bear)* I got the best Christmas gift ever!

Kyle: *(taking Amy's hand)* No, son, I got the best Christmas gift.

Mrs. Willoughby: I'd have to disagree with you, Kyle. *(looking at Mr. Willoughby and smiling.)* I got the best Christmas gift.

Amy: *(pointing to Mr. Willoughby)* I'd say *we* got the best gift.

Kyle: *(smiling)* God has blessed us!

Joey: Every one!

SONG: REPRISE OF SING MERRY CHRISTMAS! *(cast and choir)*

*Lights down on scene
Invitation*

The actual script is 28 pages long.

With the music, the performance time is approx. 1 hour.

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