

# JACK WILLOUGHBY'S CHRISTMAS CRISIS

By Eddie McPherson

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## **DEDICATION**

*I would like to dedicate this script to my mom and dad who always gave me the freedom to be a creative kid. Thanks for watching all my little "plays" I used to put on in the living room.*

*The Playwright,  
Eddie McPherson*

## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

When Jack Willoughby's youth minister has to go out of town at the last minute to visit his sick aunt, he leaves his best student, Jack, in charge of this year's Christmas play. But when everyone begins arriving at the church for the first rehearsal, this teen realizes his task may be more than he bargained for.

Strange noises are heard in the empty church, an unknown janitor begins appearing and disappearing, and no one wants to cooperate with the new young director. It's beginning to look as if there may not be a play after all.

Then things begin to change as the mysterious custodian helps Jack understand an important lesson, teaching him that God can take something hopeless and turn it into something He can use...a play gone wrong, a manger, our lives.

By adding a student choir and favorite Christmas carols, this fun play runs approximately one hour.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4 m, 2 w, 4 flexible, and a choir or singers)*

**ROBERT:** Youth minister who leaves Jack in charge.

**JACK:** A well-meaning teenager who tries to direct the Christmas play.

**TOBY:** A somewhat arrogant teen who thinks he can sing.

**HALA:** The church custodian, or so she says.

**NICOLE:** Very moody with a negative, then positive attitude.

**MEGAN:** Loves being in the spotlight with lead roles.

**WILLIE:** A clumsy young man who apologizes a lot.

**MICKY:** A hyperactive kid with a short attention span.

**CHUCK:** Micky's sidekick.

**BUG:** The pest of the group who's always talking but never saying anything.

**CHOIR:** Any number of singers of any age.

**\*\*The casting is flexible in the following ways:**

Robert/Jack/Chuck - May be cast as girls with changes in names and a few lines.

Hala - May be cast as a guy named Clyde.

### **SETTING**

The setting is simply a bare platform with a few boxes of various costumes and prop boxes sitting around. There may also be a card table and other odds and ends that would find their way to a church's Christmas play rehearsal. Also a keyboard is needed to play "Chopsticks." A manger is used in the musical part of the production.

### **COSTUMES**

All the kids wear modern day clothing and some need coats. Hala wears plain brown clothes or janitor's uniform with a bandanna wrapped around her hair. Mick and Chuck will need camouflage outfits. Angel and biblical costumes are used in the musical part, but don't need to be elaborate so it looks as if the kids threw them together themselves. The donkey needs to be nothing more than the boys wearing brown pants, a brown blanket thrown over them and a donkey head that looks homemade. Costumes in the musical part may vary depending on the director's wishes. Bug could wear a cutout of a tree with only his face showing for the olive tree part in the musical.

### **PROPS**

Scripts, coats, stick, coffee thermos, clipboard, push broom, dustpan, purse with cosmetic mirror, box with costumes in it, feather boa, funny hat, wooden planks, bag of carrots, guitar, water guns, large Super Soakers with tanks, toboggan hat, 3 straw hats, 3 pairs of thick glasses, newspapers, wise men gifts, doll.

## SCENE 1

*(AT RISE: JACK enters, wearing a coat and carrying the play he has written, through a door that leads to the stage area of the church's sanctuary. The stage is dimly lit. He shouts for Robert but doesn't receive an answer. He crosses to the front of the stage, cups his hands around his mouth and yells again. At that moment, ROBERT enters from an opposite door, holding a clipboard, and sees Jack. Jack doesn't see Robert and continues calling to him. Robert thinks this is funny so he continues to stand there. Jack backs toward Robert still calling his name. Suddenly, Jack turns around and is face-to-face with Robert. Jack yells.)*

JACK: Don't scare me like that!

ROBERT: *(Laughing.)* Like what?

JACK: Where did you come from?

ROBERT: The back door! Where did you come from?

JACK: *(A little embarrassed.)* Never mind.

ROBERT: *(Patting JACK on the back.)* You sure are on edge tonight.

JACK: I'm sorry, Robert, it's just that this place gives me the creeps when it's dark like this.

ROBERT: You mean all that creaking...

JACK: And squeaking...

ROBERT: And dark corners...

JACK: Musty basements...

ROBERT: Church mice...

JACK: Church mice? I'm getting out of here.

ROBERT: *(Grabbing JACK by the collar.)* I was just kidding. Calm down and let's talk about what you will be doing before everyone gets here.

JACK: Good idea.

ROBERT: *(Begins looking at HIS clipboard.)* Look, Jack, I hate to leave you holding the bag like this, but it's just there was no way of getting out of the trip to Arkansas.

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ROBERT: (*Continued.*) My aunt has gotten worse overnight so they're calling the family in. Now, if you can't do this I want you to know that I completely understand.

JACK: I don't mind doing it, Robert. In fact, I'm pretty excited about it. I've never directed a Christmas play before.

ROBERT: I realize that and I think you'll be okay. Just make sure you audition the kids, assign everyone their parts, have them memorize their lines, attend rehearsals...

JACK: ...Speak loudly and face the audience, I'll remember everything.

ROBERT: You are going to be in charge of all the rehearsals. Do you have the script?

JACK: ( *Holding it up.*) Just finished it last night. It is a Jack Willoughby original.

ROBERT: You wrote your own script? What happened to the one I gave you?

JACK: It was too adolescent. Kids are more mature these days. They need a more sophisticated play.

ROBERT: I wish you hadn't done that, but I don't have time to go through all that right now, I have a plane to catch. ( *Turns to leave.*) Don't let the boogie man get you in this dark church.

JACK: Did you have to say that just before you're about to leave me here alone?

ROBERT: Sorry. ( *A noise is heard, a far distant clanking sound.*)

JACK: Wha...what was that?

ROBERT: It sounded like clanking, or walking...( *Yelling out to the dark room.*) Hello? Is anyone in here? See, there's no one in here. I'll see you when I get back. ( *Turns to leave.*)

JACK: ( *Grabbing HIM.*) Oh, no you don't. You're not going to leave me in here all by myself.

ROBERT: If I don't leave now, I'll never make my plane.

JACK: Well, at least let me turn the lights on before you go. ( *HE exits out a door or behind a platform. The LIGHTS come up full.*) Do you see anybody?

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