

MILDRED

Merry Christmas, everyone and welcome to A.C. Gilbert's Showroom here at the A.C. Gilbert Company – home of the world's greatest toys!

(Music begins. MILDRED continues.)

#2 UP ON THE HOUSETOPI with JOLLY OLD ST. NICHOLAS

MILDRED

We have some delightful surprises for you today as we announce the newest toys for this Christmas season. Our factory workers are so happy to welcome you to the very place where the toys are made with love and care for children all over America. And speaking of children, we've invited the New Haven Children's Choir to help us welcome a very special guest!

MILDRED

(reading from newspaper)

"Because of the words of a man who makes these toys, and because of a man who loves them . . . the boys and girls of the United States are going to awake this Christmas morning upon a day as merry as Christmases past."

So says the Boston Globe this morning of our very own A.C. Gilbert!

(cheers and applause)

A.C.

Thank you. But I am telling you – it was the toys that won the day.

JUNIOR

But you invented the toys!

A.C.

And all of these beautiful people made them.

MILDRED

Mr. Gilbert, the papers are calling you "The Man Who Saved Christmas". You are becoming a national hero.

JUNIOR

Of course, he is! He stopped the government from canceling Christmas!

SCENE 2 – later that afternoon – Downstage

ROBERT and ANNA are left downstage alone, as if in front of the curtain, as the scene transitions behind them. Dialogue begins as soon as music ends.

ANNA

Do you remember the first time we danced together?

ROBERT

Indeed I do. It was last Christmas at the company Christmas party.

ANNA

Yes! Mr. Gilbert always throws the best Christmas parties! Your sister told me that she was the one who suggested we have music and dancing. And Mr. Gilbert always pays close attention to what Mrs. Gilbert has to say.

ROBERT

What if I told you that the music and dancing at the party was really my idea . . . solely so I could dance with you?

ANNA

She told me that too.

ROBERT

I am shocked – shocked to my core!

(They share a laugh together.)

ANNA

Do you realize today is our one-year anniversary?

ROBERT

Anniversary? What anniversary?

ANNA

The anniversary of when you fell in love with me.

ROBERT

I did?

ANNA

Oh yes, I am sure. I could see it in your eyes.

ROBERT

Was I that obvious?

ANNA

You were. Wasn't I?

ROBERT

Ah . . . so you're saying you also fell in love with me?

ANNA

Shouldn't everyone fall in love at Christmas?

(Music begins)

#5 EVERYONE SHOULD FALL IN LOVE AT CHRISTMAS

18 DEAR ROBERT (Underscore & Transition)

(ANNA is seated at a small desk, writing a letter to Robert. Her voice is recorded over the instrumental underscore.)

Dear Robert . . . I never know if or how or when these letters reach you, but I am determined to keep writing them in hopes that somehow you will know of my constant love for you and my longing for you to return safely home to me. The newspapers are saying that we are turning the tide and the war may end soon, but I am afraid to believe them. My sorrow would only increase all the more if this is false hope. Your sister reminds me often . . . "God is not dead nor doth He sleep" . . . but I am struggling. Perhaps God is not asleep – but so often it seems He is not paying attention. I have not heard anything from you or about you in months and, to be honest, my faith is wavering. And yet . . . I continue to pray. What else can I do?

(Fade to black)

SCENE 3 – *that same evening, Dining Room of A.C. Gilbert's home*

The Dining Room is well-appointed – reflecting the success of A.C. Gilbert. Dinner has ended as A.C., MARY, JUNIOR and ROBERT are seated around the table.

JUNIOR

Uncle Robert, Mother told me a secret about you!

ROBERT

She did?

JUNIOR

Yes. You are going to marry Anna!

ROBERT

I guess it's no longer a secret.

A.C.

It's never been a secret! We have all just been waiting for you to decide. You two are made for each other as far as I can see.

MARY

I agree. Although, I was curious about the timing, given all the war talk.

A.C.

Oh, let's not start that tonight – so close to Christmas. Just keep singing that song you like so much -

(HE sings)

I DIDN'T RAISE MY BOY TO BE A SOLDIER!

JUNIOR

But mother, what if I want to be a soldier? Soldiers are brave and strong!

A.C.

Yes, they are! But soldiers also need their sleep. Go prepare for bed and Mother and I will be up soon to tuck you in.

JUNIOR

Yes, Father. Mother, I am going to add toy soldiers to my list for Santa!

(JUNIOR excitedly exits. After a moment, ROBERT speaks.)

ROBERT

It seems even Junior understands what's going on in the world.

MARY

Sadly, yes. It's awful and it needs to end immediately.

ROBERT

I'm afraid that for us, it may be just beginning.

MARY

Then why did you propose to Anna now? It seems impossible to plan anything with these war drums getting louder every day.

ROBERT

For the very reason that I don't feel I should wait. I want Anna to know that I am committed to her no matter what may happen with the war.

A.C.

I am confident we will be fine. President Wilson won the election precisely because he kept us out of the war.

MARY

You mean the election that only men were allowed to vote in?

A.C.

Yes. That one. But - our profits have never been higher with all of the German toys off the market. The war is good business!

MARY

A.C., you know I hate it when you talk like that. There's nothing good about war.

A.C.

That's why staying out of it is so important. Every nation at war in Europe is represented by the employees on the floor of our factory. Tensions are high enough already – I cannot imagine what it would be like between them if America joins the fight.

ROBERT

But what if we have no choice? The evil atrocities we read about every day in the paper cannot continue. Poison gas? I don't believe the Germans will stop unless they are stopped by force.

MARY

We must pray and work for peace. God is not dead, nor doth He sleep.

A.C.

This conversation is upsetting my stomach!

(Music begins)

Can we at least put it off until New Year's Day?!

#7 THE MIDDLE