

A Christmas Carol

(EXPANDED CAST VERSION)

Adapted by Michele L. Vacca

(Based on Charles Dickens' immortal classic)

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By Michele L. Vacca

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CHARACTERS:

Characters who appear in multiple scenes:

EBENEZER SCROOGE, a man of business and a miser

BOB CRATCHIT, his over-worked clerk

MRS. EMILY CRATCHIT, Bob's devoted wife

 Their children:

 MARTHA CRATCHIT, 17-18 years old

 PETER CRATCHIT, 14-16 years old

 BELINDA CRATCHIT, 12 years old

 ROBBIE CRATCHIT, 10 years old

 ANNIE CRATCHIT, 8 years old

 TINY TIM, the youngest Cratchit child

A GROUP OF CHARITY COLLECTORS WHO VISIT SCROOGE:

 MISS HOLLY DO-WELL

 MR. QUENTIN QUIMBY

 MRS. RUMMIDGE

 MR. WILBUR WORTHY

FRED, Scrooge's cheerful nephew

ELIZABETH, Fred's charming wife

CHRISTOPHER SLY, a *Cockney ragpicker and junk dealer

MRS. DILBUR, a *Cockney laundress

LUCY MCDUGAL, a *Cockney charwoman

WILLIE HAGGARTY, a *Cockney entrepreneur

DAVID, a young husband in debt to Mr. Scrooge

CAROLINE, his courageous wife

GEORGIE, MOLLY, and BETSY, **urchin children of the streets

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Optional/or Alternate guests at Fred and Elizabeth's home on pages 46-48

 (See "DOUBLING" Note #3 on page 4)

 MISS HARRIET HAVERSHAM

 MRS. ANNABELLE TANNENBAUM

 MR. WILBUR WARBLE

 MR. ALFRED JINGLE

Characters who **only** appear in the **PAST**:

 (See "DOUBLING" Note #1 on page 4)

GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY

YOUNG BOY SCROOGE

MR. PHINEAS PRINGLE, Young Scrooge's heartless schoolmaster

MISS PHAEDRA PRINGLE, his equally heartless sister

FAN, Scrooge's young sister
YOUNG MAN SCROOGE
YOUNG JACOB MARLEY
SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST
FREDERICK "Freddie" FEZZIWIG, Young Scrooge's employer
FELICITY FEZZIWIG, his wife
 Their daughters:
 FLORA FEZZIWIG
 FAUNA FEZZIWIG
 FIONA FEZZIWIG
DICK WILKENS, a young Fezziwig apprentice
BELLE, Young Scrooge's sweetheart
CATHERINE, Belle's friend

ADDITIONAL GUESTS AT THE FEZZIWIG PARTY:

(These characters can be optional; See "DOUBLING" note #2 on page 4)

TOM AND ELIZA JENKINS
MRS. POOLE
JENNY
MAGGIE
JAMIE
HARRY HOPKINS

The Expanded Cast Version of A CHRISTMAS CAROL has a total of 42 principal speaking roles plus 7 additional small (essentially non-speaking) roles. The director has the further option of adding 4 more speaking roles to the play if needed or deemed necessary. (See "DOUBLING" notes on page 4)

Additional option: Create a group of Carolers either from the actors playing the scripted roles or utilize an entirely different group. These Carolers could perform a dual function; they could provide live musical interludes during the play and they could also assist with the set changes.

All of the roles in this play are based upon/or inspired by characters found in the Dickens short novel – or in a few cases – within other Dickens material. Dialogue has been somewhat Americanized, eliminating or simplifying terms and expressions foreign to modern Americans.

DOUBLING (And adjusting the cast size):

"Doubling" – an actor playing more than one role – may be utilized or not as needed. Presumably a group selecting the Expanded Cast Version of the

play probably has minimal need for extensive doubling. However, in a number of cases doubling might be convenient and necessary.

Note #1: For example, all of the characters who appear in the “Past” segment of the play (pages 21-35) can be doubled by the actors who appear in the rest of the play.

At the total discretion of the director all of the actors/characters can take part in any of the crowd scenes and all could potentially double except Older Scrooge (who has no time for doubling) and Tiny Tim (who would probably be too recognizable).

Note #2: The “additional” Fezziwig party guests (pages 29-32) and the lines referring to them can be cut if desired.

Note #3: If the director needs/wants to create additional speaking roles the names of the “Optional/or Alternate guests” at Fred and Elizabeth’s home (pages 46-48) may be substituted for ones printed in the script. The director also has the option of leaving the scripted lines as assigned and simply adding the additional four characters as “extras” or non-solo line speakers in the scene.

PRODUCTION NOTES – TIME, PLACE AND COSTUMES:

London, England, in the 1840’s. The flashback sequences take place 40/60 years earlier, depending upon how Old Scrooge is to be played. Most of the costumes, therefore, should be early Victorian. Since many of the characters are poor, fabrics and trims need not be elaborate or expensive. However, the scenes from the past could have richer costumes, thus providing a greater contrast between Scrooge past and Scrooge present. The Spirits and the Ghost of Marley present opportunities for creative costuming, or a “traditional” approach can be used; the first Spirit dressed in a filmy tunic or robe, the second as a St. Nicholas figure, and the third in a long hooded, dark robe. Marley’s costume could possibly suggest that he has toiled through his 7 years penance clothed in the same suit. There are a number of excellent web sites to assist with further research about Charles Dickens, and the clothing, furniture, and Christmas customs in the early Victorian England.

SETTINGS:

Suggested scenery works best for this play, i.e., a lamp post to suggest a street, door and window frames only and not a full door or wall setting.

This way, even the tiniest of theatres can stage the play without a cumbersome amount of scenery and set pieces.

If space is limited, too many set pieces can hopelessly clutter this play's production. Simplicity is best. Each act requires particular areas that should be preset as much as possible to eliminate excessive scene changes. The only permanent portion of the set is an area to indicate Scrooge's chambers – it should not be large, but there should be an indicated bed (never actually used for long), perhaps a small table and an oil lamp, and ideally, a window frame. Other suggested settings required for Act I are: the street, Scrooge's office, and a small area for the schoolroom scene. Act II requires: the street, the office area (which is now Fezziwig's office), the kitchen of the Cratchit home (tables, chairs, stools or benches (or a combination), a fireplace frame), and an area to indicate a parlour in Fred and Elizabeth's home, the gravestone which the Spirit reveals, and Scrooge's bedchamber.

HELPFUL TERMS DEFINED FOR YOUR ACTORS:

*“COCKNEY”: The term “Cockney” refers to working-class inhabitants of London, particularly east London, and the slang used by these people. It is also often used in reference to the “cockney accent,” the accent common among London's working-class.

You can assist your actors in studying this accent by listening to songs from “MY FAIR LADY” and/or listening to or watching a recording of that musical/and/or watching a dramatization of the play PYGMALION. This will give them an excellent basis for the “Cockney accent.”

**“URCHIN” – or street urchin – a child who spends most of his/her time in the streets especially in slum areas; guttersnipe, street gamin – a homeless child who has been abandoned and roams the streets; a poor and often mischievous city child.

SPECIAL:

The use of music, live or taped, greatly enhances the production of this play. We recommend the use of traditional Carols to provide most of the background music for the play. Sound effects such as clock chimes, blowing wind, chains clanking and so on are easily obtainable on the Internet for no cost.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Expanded Cast Version

Adapted by Michele L. Vacca

(On Stage! – E-mail: classstage@aol.com – protected by copyright)

ACT I

(SETTING: LONDON, 1840. A MULTIPLE AREA SET. SCROOGE'S BEDROOM IS ON ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE. THERE IS A STREET AREA WITH STOREFRONTS, PERHAPS, AND A STREET LAMP. SCROOGE'S OFFICE IS ALSO SET ON ONE PORTION OF THE STAGE. MUSIC PLAYS. IT IS EARLY MORNING ON CHRISTMAS EVE. BELLS RING. SCROOGE IS SOUND ASLEEP IN HIS BED. CHEERFUL VOICES HEARD FROM OFF STAGE.)

VOICE I: (OFF.) A Merry Christmas to you!

VOICE II: (OFF.) And to you!

(BELLS STILL RING; MUSIC PLAYS SOFTLY.)

SCROOGE: (STIRS IN HIS SLEEP, SNORTS, GRUMBLES, TURNS OVER.) Bah! Humbug! (GOES BACK TO SLEEP.)

(SUDDENLY THE STREET BEGINS TO FILL WITH HAPPY PEOPLE CROSSING BACK AND FORTH. SOME CARRY PACKAGES, SOME ARE ON EARLY MORNING ERRANDS – THEY ARE SHOPPING, OR GOING TO WORK. SOME PEOPLE IN THE CROWD ARE: FRED AND ELIZABETH, BOB CRATCHIT WITH TIM, BELINDA, ROBBIE AND ANNIE, FOUR CHARITY COLLECTORS, DAVID AND CAROLINE, MRS. DILBUR AND CHRISTOPHER SLY AND THEIR FRIENDS MR. HAGGARTY AND MRS. MCDUGAL, THREE STREET URCHINS – GEORGIE, MOLLIE AND BETSY. AS THEY CROSS THE STAGE, THEY GREET EACH OTHER AND INTER-RELATE WITH AD LIBS FOR A MOMENT OR TWO.

(MRS. DILBUR STANDS OFF TO THE SIDE WATCHING THE PEOPLE. SHE HAS A LARGE BUNDLE OF LAUNDRY. CHRISTOPHER SLY, AN OLD JUNK DEALER, CROSSES TO HER. HE WEARS A NUMBER OF RAGGED CLOTHES, LAYERS AND LAYERS OF THEM, ALL PART OF HIS WARES.)

SLY: (SLAPPING MRS. DILBUR ON THE BACK.) Well, well, if it ain't me favorite girl!

DILBUR: (SLAPPING HIM ON THE BACK.) Well, look who's here! If it ain't Christopher Sly!

SLY: That's right, me dear, and how are you, Mrs. Dilbur?

DILBUR: Could be better.

SLY: Oh?

DILBUR: And could be worse.

SLY: (SLAPPING HER ON THE BACK.) That's the spirit, dearie!

(BOB CRATCHIT APPEARS WITH BELINDA, ROBBIE, ANNIE AND TINY TIM. BELINDA AND ROBBIE LEAD THE WAY, TIM RIDES ON HIS FATHER'S SHOULDERS, AND ANNIE FOLLOWS THEM ALL.)

ROBBIE: Hurry up, Annie!

TIM: (ECHOES HIM.) Hurry up, Annie!

ANNIE: You're all going too fast!

BELINDA: No, we're not. You're just slow.

ANNIE: Wait for me, Papa!

CRATCHIT: (STOPS, WAITS FOR HER.) Hold on to my hand, Annie. I want to do some errands for your mother before it's time for me to go to work.

BELINDA: (TO ANNIE.) So, you need to walk faster.

CRATCHIT: Hush, Belinda. (TO ANNIE.) And I don't want to be late. Mr. Scrooge would be very angry.

BELINDA: (TO ANNIE.) You see?

ANNIE: Would he shout at you?

ROBBIE: (TO BELINDA.) I bet he would.

BELINDA: (TO ROBBIE.) I bet he would, too.

CRATCHIT: I suppose he might, Annie.

BELINDA: (TO ANNIE.) You see?

ROBBIE: (TO ANNIE.) We told you!

CRATCHIT: (TO BELINDA AND ROBBIE.) That's enough, children.

ANNIE: Oh! He's just a terrible man.
CRATCHIT: (AMUSED.) Now, Annie –
ANNIE: You're not supposed to shout at people on Christmas Eve!
Isn't that right, Papa?
CRATCHIT: Yes, child, I suppose it is. Come along, now.
ROBBIE: Hurry up, Annie!
BELINDA: We don't want Papa to be late!
CRATCHIT: Careful, Tim, don't fall off!
TIM: Yes, Papa. (AS THEY ALL GO.) Hurry, Annie!

(DAVID AND CAROLINE, ENTER – A TRIFLE
SHABBY PERHAPS – BUT THEY ARE CHEERFUL.)

CAROLINE: Oh, David, isn't it a beautiful Christmas Eve?
DAVID: It is indeed, Caroline.
CAROLINE: I only wish –
DAVID: I know.
CAROLINE: I only wish we could afford something nice for the
children. They're too young to understand about debts
and mortgages.
DAVID: Perhaps next year things will be better. If any other man
in the world held our mortgage, I'd –
CAROLINE: That Mr. Scrooge! You'd think even he would be
generous at Christmas time!
DAVID: Generous? No, Caroline, not Mr. Scrooge. (POINTS.)
Look! There's Fred and Elizabeth!

(FRED AND ELIZABETH ENTER, WAVING TO
OTHER PEOPLE OFF STAGE.)

CAROLINE: (TO DAVID.) How could a cross-patch like Mr. Scrooge
ever have such a good-hearted nephew?
DAVID: (WAVES TO FRED.) It's a mystery, Caroline, but Fred is
certainly the opposite of his Uncle Scrooge.
FRED: (GREETING THEM.) David! Caroline!
ELIZABETH: Merry Christmas!
DAVID: (SHAKING HANDS WITH FRED.) Merry Christmas,
Fred and Elizabeth.
ELIZABETH: How are your children?
CAROLINE: Quite well, thank you. Are you and Fred going to visit us
tonight?
FRED: Definitely. We'll be there.
DAVID: Good. We'll see you then.

(DAVID AND CAROLINE GO OFF. FRED AND ELIZABETH MEET CRATCHIT RETURNING WITH HIS CHILDREN.)

CRATCHIT: Let's hurry, children.
ROBBIE: Hurry up, Annie!
BELINDA: We don't want Papa to be late!
FRED: It's Bob Cratchit!
CRATCHIT: (STOPPING) Why, how are you, sir? Children, this is Mr. Scrooge's nephew and his wife. (PRESENTS HIS CHILDREN.) Belinda, Robbie, Annie and Tim.
ELIZABETH: How do you do, Belinda and Robbie –
BELINDA: (SHYLY.) How do you do, Ma'am. (ASIDE TO ROBBIE.) Go on, say something, silly!
ROBBIE: (SHYLY TO ELIZABETH.) Uh – hello, ma'am.
FRED: (GALLANTLY TIPS HIS HAT AND BOWS.) And a very good day to you, Miss Annie and Master Tim.
ANNIE: (HIDES BEHIND CRATCHIT.) Oh!
TIM: (AWE-STRUCK.) You really know Mr. Scrooge?
FRED: (LAUGHS.) Oh, yes I “really” do.
ELIZABETH: (ASIDE TO HER HUSBAND.) Why, Fred, I think they're afraid of you!
CRATCHIT: (WHO OVERHEARS.) Ah, you see, sir, I – that is – they have heard me occasionally – ah – speak of Mr. Scrooge, and – ah – they may think – I mean –
FRED: (SMILES.) Oh, I understand, Bob. (TO ANNIE.) In fact, I'm going to pay a call on my “terrible” uncle this morning and, believe me, even though I've talked to him many times, he still frightens me a little, too.
ANNIE: (COMING OUT FROM BEHIND HER FATHER.)
Truly?
FRED: Truly.
BELINDA AND ROBBIE: (LAUGH.)
TIM: (LAUGHS, TOO.) That's very funny!

(THE FOUR CHARITY COLLECTORS – TWO LADIES AND TWO GENTLEMEN – ALL QUITE RESPECTABLE AND PROPER-LOOKING – HAVE GATHERED NEARBY, AND NOW BEGIN SINGING A CHRISTMAS CAROL JUST BELOW SCROOGE'S BEDROOM WINDOW. Song suggestion: “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen.” OTHERS ON THE STREET

STOP AND ENJOY THE SONG. MANY JOIN IN.)

FRED: (POINTS.) Look!
TIM: Papa, I want to sing!
BELINDA: Me, too, Papa!
ROBBIE: Me, too!
ANNIE: And me, too!
CRATCHIT: All right. There's time.

(FRED TAKES ANNIE'S HAND, AND THEY ALL JOIN THE SINGERS. SOON EVERYONE IS SINGING – SLY AND MRS. DILBUR. THE SINGING GROWS LOUDER AND THE NOISE WAKES SCROOGE.)

SCROOGE: (SITS UP IN BED) Bah! What's that terrible noise? (HEARS THE SINGING.) Bah! Singing! (GETS OUT OF BED, STOMPS TO THE WINDOW AND SHOUTS.) Stop that singing! Stop it, I say! (LOUDER) Humbug! (PICKS UP A SHOE.) Stop that singing! Bah! (THROWS HIS SHOE, WHICH LANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GROUP; THE SINGING STOPS.) Humbug!

CROWD: (THEY GASP, LOOK UP AT HIM IN SHOCK, THEN SPEAK TO EACH OTHER.) What was that? Oh! What happened? The very idea! And on Christmas Eve, too! It's terrible! Oh, my goodness! Who is he? It's Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE: (TO THE CROWD.) Humbug! How do you expect me to sleep with all that horrible clatter? If you must sing, go sing somewhere else. Stay away from here, or I'll call the authorities. Go away!

CROWD: (MOVES AWAY, MURMURING INDIGNANTLY.)

TINY TIM: (CALLS OUT.) Merry Christmas, sir!

SCROOGE: (SHOUTS.) Merry Humbug!

(AS THE CROWD DRIFTS OFF TO OTHER AREAS OF THE STAGE, SCROOGE STOMPS AROUND HIS ROOM, TRYING TO FIND HIS CLOTHES.)

SCROOGE: (GRUMBLING.) Merry Christmas! Humbug! Can't let decent people sleep! All that bellowing and clattering! Bah! Where's my shoe? (REMEMBERS HE THREW IT OUT THE WINDOW) Agh! (GOES TO WINDOW,

SHOUTS DOWN TO CHRISTOPHER SLY, WHO IS THE ONE NEAREST TO HIM.) You! You there!

SLY: Me, sir?

SCROOGE: Yes, yes, yes! You! Fetch my shoe!

SLY: What, sir?

SCROOGE: My shoe! My shoe! It's right there! In front of you! Idiot!

SLY: (PICKS IT UP.) This shoe, sir?

SCROOGE: Yes, yes! That shoe! Bring it here! I'll go open the door. (HE GOES OFF ACTUALLY TO CHANGE INTO HIS STREET CLOTHES.)

SLY: (WITH A MOCKING BOW TO THE EMPTY WINDOW.) Yes, sir. Whatever you say, yer Lordship.

DILBUR: (WHO IS CLOSE BY.) The old skinflint. I tell you, Mr. Sly, you should see me trying to get him to pay me for doing his laundry. It's like I was pulling 'is teeth!

SLY: (NUDGES HER WITH HIS ELBOW.) If he had any! (THEY LAUGH.) This shoe looks worse than some of the junk I sell in me shop.

DILBUR: That's old Scrooge fer you. What does he care?

SLY: I just wish I had his money. I wouldn't be wearing shoes that looked like this, I'll tell you that, Mrs. Dilbur.

DILBUR: (NUDGES HIM.) Well, if you ask me, I think he's saving his money, so he can take it all with him!

SLY: Well, it would be the first time anybody got away with it! (THEY LAUGH.) I'd better take this shoe to him be afore I get thrown into the nearest prison.

DILBUR: (AS HE GOES) And don't be thinking you'll get a penny for yer trouble, either! (THEY LAUGH AGAIN.)

(MR. SLY GOES INTO THE HOUSE. MRS. DILBUR JOINS THE OTHERS. THE CROWD STARTS TO SCATTER, SOME OF THEM AGAIN SINGING AS THEY CALL OUT GREETINGS TO EACH OTHER. SCROOGE SUDDENLY EMERGES FROM HIS HOUSE. HE IS ON HIS WAY TO HIS OFFICE.)

SLY: (FOLLOWING SCROOGE AS HE COMES OUT BOWS MOCKINGLY.) This way, yer Lordship.

SCROOGE: (FLINGS SLY OUT OF HIS WAY.) Bah!

DILBUR: (APPROACHES SCROOGE.) Mr. Scrooge, sir. I wonder if I could take a moment of yer time, sir.

SCROOGE: You already have! Let me by! (STARTS PAST HER.)

DILBUR: (SHOUTS AFTER HIM.) I just wondered when you're going to pay me for the laundry.
SCROOGE: Bah!
DILBUR: And the cleaning!
SCROOGE: Bah! (HE CONTINUES WALKING.)
DILBUR: (TO SLY.) The old skinflint!
SLY: Right!

(SCROOGE GRUMPILY STOMPS TOWARD HIS OFFICE, GLARING AT EVERYONE AND RUDELY PUSHING PAST ANYONE IN HIS WAY.)

SCROOGE: Bah! Out of my way! Move along! Stand aside!
CRATCHIT: (SPEAKS HURRIEDLY TO FRED, NOT WANTING SCROOGE TO SEE HIM IN THE CROWD.) I must hurry. Come, children, hurry! You have to go home now, so I won't be late for work. Hurry!
ANNIE: (POINTS.) Is that Mr. Scrooge?
CRATCHIT: Shhhhh! (THEY GO OFF.)
FRED: Let's go, Elizabeth. I don't think I want to see Uncle Scrooge this early.
ELIZABETH: (GIGGLES.) Oh, Fred! (THEY GO OFF, TOO.)
SCROOGE: (STOMPING INTO HIS OFFICE, SUCCESSFULLY SCATTERING THE LAST OF THE CROWD) Humbug! (AS HE SLAMS THE DOOR) All this commotion and confusion! Bah! (GOES INTO HIS OFFICE AREA) Cratchit! Cratchit! Where are you? Cratchit! Bah! Late! (TAKES OFF HIS HAT, HANGS UP HIS SCARF AND WHILE HIS BACK IS TURNED, CRATCHIT DASHES INTO THE OFFICE, AND TRIES TO TIPTOE TO HIS DESK, BUT JUST AS CRATCHIT STARTS TO BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF – SHOUTS.) Cratchit!
CRATCHIT: Y-yes, sir?
SCROOGE: (SNAPS OPEN HIS POCKET WATCH.) You're late, Cratchit.
CRATCHIT: Y-yes, sir.
SCROOGE: Late again, Cratchit.
CRATCHIT: Yes, sir. I had some shopping to do for my wife, and then the children, you see –
SCROOGE: Cratchit! Spare me an account of the humdrum details of your hearth and home. You are supposed to be here on time!

CRATCHIT: Yes, sir.
SCROOGE: To work!
CRATCHIT: Yes, sir. (SEATS HIMSELF, PULLS OUT A LEDGER AND BEGINS TO WORK.)
SCROOGE: Bah! (GOES TO HIS OWN DESK, PULLS OUT A LARGE BAG OF GOLD AND BEGINS TO COUNT.) . . . 25, 35, 40, 45, 50. . .

(TIME PASSES. THEN FRED ENTERS THROUGH THE OUTSIDE DOOR. HE SIGNALS CRATCHIT TO BE QUIET, AND TIPTOES OVER TO SCROOGE. THE CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE.)

FRED: A Merry Christmas, Uncle. God save you!
SCROOGE: (STARTLED, SCATTERS HIS GOLD PIECES.) Bah! (STARTS TO PICK THEM UP.) Humbug!
FRED: (SMILES.) Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that, I'm sure!
SCROOGE: I do! (SCORNFULLY.) Merry Christmas! What right have you to be so merry? You're poor enough.
FRED: Come then. What right have you to be so gloomy? You're rich enough. (HOLDS OUT A GOLD PIECE HE FOUND ON THE FLOOR.)
SCROOGE: Bah! Give me that! (SNATCHES THE GOLD PIECE FROM FRED'S HAND AND PICKS UP THE LAST OF THE OTHERS.) Humbug! Merry Christmas, indeed! If I had my way, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips would be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!
FRED: (SHOCKED.) Uncle!
SCROOGE: (MOCKING.) Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.
FRED: Keep it! But you don't keep it.
SCROOGE: Let me leave it alone then. Christmas! Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!
FRED: But, Uncle, I've always thought of Christmas as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. Christmas is the only time I know when people open their hearts freely. (HE'S GETTING CARRIED AWAY.) And, therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

CRATCHIT: (WHO HAS BEEN LISTENING APPROVINGLY.) Yes, sir! (HE APPLAUDS.)

SCROOGE: (ADVANCING TOWARD CRATCHIT.) Let me hear another sound from you, and you'll keep Christmas by losing your situation!

CRATCHIT: (FEARFULLY RETREATS TO HIS DESK.) Y-yes, sir.

SCROOGE: (SARCASTICALLY TO FRED.) You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into politics.

FRED: Now, don't be angry, Uncle. Come and have dinner with us tomorrow!

SCROOGE: Bah! You'll see me dead first!

FRED: But why? Why?

SCROOGE: (TURNS ON HIM SUDDENLY.) And why did you get married?

FRED: (STARTLED.) Why, because I was in love.

SCROOGE: (MOCKING.) Oh, you were in love! Bah! Good afternoon!

FRED: But, Uncle, you never came to see me before I was married, so why give it as a reason for not coming now?

SCROOGE: Bah! Good afternoon!

FRED: I want nothing from you. I ask nothing of you. Why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

FRED: I'm sorry to find you so stubborn, Uncle, but I'll keep my good humor to the last. Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE: Humbug to you and good afternoon! (HE PUSHES FRED TO THE DOOR.)

FRED: And a happy New Year!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon! (HE OPENS THE DOOR.)

FRED: Very well, Uncle. Good afternoon. Merry Christmas, Bob!

CRATCHIT: Thank you, sir!

FRED: And best wishes to your family.

CRATCHIT: Thank you, sir. Merry Christmas!

(FRED GOES OUT.)

SCROOGE: (MUTTERS TO HIMSELF AS HE CLOSSES THE DOOR.) Merry Christmas! Bah! Merry Humbug!

(SCROOGE GOES BACK TO HIS DESK. THE FOUR CHARITY COLLECTORS APPEAR, BENT ON THEIR MISSION TO DO "GOOD WORKS". AS THE OTHERS

GATHER AROUND, ONE GENTLEMAN CONSULTS A LITTLE NOTEBOOK. THE STREET URCHINS, GEORGIE, MOLLIE AND BETSY FOLLOW THEM, PERHAPS HOPING FOR A HANDOUT. THEN THE CHILDREN STOP AT SCROOGE'S DOOR.)

MOLLIE: Let's try here. (TO GEORGIE AND BETSY.) Ready?

GEORGIE: (WITH A SIGH.) Oh, I suppose. But I'm telling you, Mollie, it won't do any good.

MOLLIE: It can't hurt to try. Ready?

GEORGIE, MOLLIE, AND BETSY: (SINGING.) "Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la la, la la la la. 'Tis the season to be jolly, fa la . . ."

SCROOGE: Bah! (STOMPS TO HIS DOOR, OPENS IT, SHOUTS AT THE CHILDREN.) Begone! Go away!

GEORGIE, MOLLIE, AND BETSY: (FEARFULLY.) Yes, sir.

SCROOGE: Begone, I say!

MOLLIE: Yes, sir.

BETSY: We hear you, sir.

GEORGIE: It's just a Christmas Carol, sir.

SCROOGE: Humbug! I hate Christmas Carols! Bah! Just take yourselves and your fa-la-la's off somewhere else! Do you hear me?

GEORGIE: We hear you, sir.

SCROOGE: Bah! (HE STOMPS BACK TO HIS DESK.)

(HAVING WATCHED THIS SCENE, THE COLLECTORS OF CHARITY CONFER.)

QUIMBY: (TO THE OTHERS.) Oh, my goodness.

RUMMIDGE: I fear we may have some difficulty here.

WORTHY: Well, let's go inside and try.

DO-WELL: Our cause is a worthy one, after all.

(THE YOUNG URCHINS ALSO CONFER.)

GEORGIE: What a grumbler! Well, I told you, Mollie. I told you it wouldn't work. Old Scrooge would rather be boiled in oil before he'd give the likes of us any pennies.

MOLLIE: You think he'd give us one penny at least.

BETSY: (MOANS.) I'm sooooo hungry.

MOLLIE: We know, Betsy.

GEORGIE: Oh, Mollie, you know old Scrooge wouldn't give a penny

even to his own mum – not even if she was dying on his ugly doorstep.

MOLLIE: He's just an awful terrible old man!

GEORGIE: So? What can we do about it?

MOLLIE: (SIGHS.) Nothing, I guess . . .

BETSY: Mollie, I'm really hungry.

MOLLIE: I know, little sister, I know. I'm really hungry, too.

BETSY: We haven't had anything to eat all day today.

MOLLIE: I know.

BETSY: Did we have anything to eat yesterday either? I forget.

MOLLIE: I know, Betsy. Me, too.

BETSY: I'm so tired and hungry, Betsy. I think I'll just lie down here on the curb and sleep . . .

GEORGIE: Betsy, you can't do that!

MOLLIE: Georgie, do something!

GEORGIE: I'll try, Mollie. You know I will.

MOLLIE: (POINTS TO CHARITY COLLECTOR GROUP.) Go ask them for a few pennies. Go on. Do it.

GEORGIE: All right, all right. I will.

QUIMBY: (GESTURES TO SCROOGE'S DOOR, ADDRESSES THE REST OF THE CHARITY GROUP.) Shall we?

RUMMIDGE: (WITH A SIGH.) We must go forward.

GEORGIE: (TO CHARITY GROUP.) Sirs, and ladies, If you'll pardon me fer interruptin' I was just wonderin' if you could see your way clear to offerin' me a few pennies so as I can buy a bite of food for my two little sisters? We're all starving, you see, and haven't had no food for the last two days. A few pennies would be all we need if'n you c'n spare 'em, good gents and ladies, if you please.

WORTHY: (TO THE OTHERS.) You see? We have no choice.

DO-WELL: The children need us.

QUIMBY: They certainly do.

RUMMIDGE: (TO GEORGIE) Here, young man. (GIVES HIM A HANDFUL OF COINS.)

GEORGIE: Thank you, ma'am! (HE RETURNS TO HIS SISTERS AND SHOWS THEM THE COINS.) Come on Mollie, wake up Betsy, we're goin' to eat tonight!

MOLLIE: Oh, Georgie, how wonderful!

BETSY: Truly, Georgie? We're really going to have some food?

GEORGIE: Yes, indeed. Come along, Betsy. Mollie will help you.

(THE THREE HAPPY CHILDREN EXIT, THE CHARITY GROUP PREPARES TO ENTER)

SCROOGE'S OFFICE. WHEN THEY STEP INSIDE,
SCROOGE GLARES AT THEM.)

QUIMBY: (CLEARING HIS THROAT.) Ahem!
SCROOGE: Yes? What d'you want?
QUIMBY: (CONSULTING HIS NOTEBOOK.) "SCROOGE AND
MARLEY'S," I believe.
SCROOGE: It is.
RUMMIDGE: Do we have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or
Mr. Marley?
SCROOGE: Mr. Marley is dead.
RUMMIDGE: Oh. (A PAUSE.)
SCROOGE: He died seven years ago this very night.
DO-WELL: Oh, my! (TO RUMMIDGE.) On Christmas Eve!
RUMMIDGE: (TO DO-WELL.) Most unfortunate, I must say.
QUIMBY: (OFFERS NOTEBOOK.) Our credentials, sir
SCROOGE: (GLANCES AT THEM, HANDS THEM BACK.) Bah!
WORTHY: But – we have no doubt, sir, that Mr. Marley's generosity
is well represented by his surviving partner.
SCROOGE: (FROWNS.) Generosity?
DO-WELL: (VERY EARNESTLY.) At this festive season of the year,
Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we
should make some slight provision for the poor and
destitute.
SCROOGE: Ah! I see. ((PAUSE.) Are there no prisons?
WORTHY: (STARTLED.) Why, plenty of prisons.
SCROOGE: And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?
QUIMBY: They are, sir. But I wish I could say they were not.
SCROOGE: (ENJOYING HIMSELF.) Oh, well, I was afraid from
what you said at first, that some lunatic had interfered with
those excellent establishments.
DO-WELL: (TO RUMMIDGE.) Oh, my goodness!
GENTLEMAN: Sir. We feel that prisons and workhouses scarcely furnish
Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitudes.
SCROOGE: Hmph!
RUMMIDGE: That is why at this special time of year a few of us are
trying to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink,
and means of warmth.
QUIMBY: (READY TO WRITE IN HIS BOOK.) What shall we put
you down for?
SCROOGE: Nothing!
WORTHY: Ah, I understand! You wish to remain anonymous?
SCROOGE: No, I wish to be left alone!

DO-WELL: Oh, dear!
SCROOGE: I can't afford to make idle people merry! Let those who are badly off go to the prisons and workhouses!
WORTHY: Sir, many of them can't go there –
DO-WELL: – and many would rather die!
SCROOGE: Well, if they would rather die, then they had better just do it, and decrease the surplus population.
DO-WELL: (INDIGNANT.) Mr. Scrooge!
QUIMBY: (EVEN MORE INDIGNANT.) Sir!
SCROOGE: It's enough for a man to care for his own business, without interfering with other people's!
RUMMIDGE: (SPEECHLESS WITH INDIGNATION.) Well!
SCROOGE: Sirs, Ladies, good afternoon! (HE OPENS THE DOOR.)
DO-WELL: Well! Of all the –
QUIMBY: (TO THE OTHERS.) It seems we've wasted our time here.
RUMMIDGE: I should say so!

(THEY GO OUT THE DOOR AND DISAPPEAR DOWN THE STREET.)

SCROOGE: Bah! What a lot of humbug! (CLOSES THE DOOR WITH A BANG AND GOES BACK TO HIS DESK.)

(TIME PASSES. THE CLOCK CHIMES FIVE. CRATCHIT STIRS AT HIS DESK, CLOSES HIS LEDGER, RISES, AND GOES TO SCROOGE.)

SCROOGE: Well, Cratchit, what do you want?
CRATCHIT: Mr. Scrooge, sir, I just wanted to remind you, that is, the bells just chimed five o'clock, sir.
SCROOGE: So?
CRATCHIT: Well, it's Christmas Eve, sir, and I wanted to do a tiny bit of shopping.
SCROOGE: Shopping? On fifteen shillings a week?
CRATCHIT: Ah – yes, sir.
SCROOGE: Hmph!
CRATCHIT: And you did say that I could leave early today.
SCROOGE: (STARTLED.) I did? When did I say that?
CRATCHIT: Well, sir –
SCROOGE: Bah! Never mind! If you're going to pace around the office telling me what time it is for two more hours, you might as well go. You're no good to me here.

CRATCHIT: Thank you, sir!
SCROOGE: Bah!
CRATCHIT: Yes, sir.
SCROOGE: You'll want all day tomorrow off, I suppose?
CRATCHIT: If it's quite convenient, sir.
SCROOGE: Well, It is not convenient. And it's not fair.
CRATCHIT: No, sir.
SCROOGE: It's not fair that I pay you a day's wages for no work.
CRATCHIT: But, it's only once a year, sir.
SCROOGE: Humbug! That's a poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty- fifth of December! But I suppose you must have the whole day.
CRATCHIT: Ah, yes, sir, if I may –
SCROOGE: Hmph! (CRATCHIT STARTS TO LEAVE.) But be here all the earlier the next morning!
CRATCHIT: Oh, yes, sir, I will, sir. I promise.
SCROOGE: Bah!
CRATCHIT: Yes, sir. I thank you, sir. Good night, sir. (PAUSES AT THE DOOR.) And – Merry Christmas, sir!
SCROOGE: Humbug!

(CRATCHIT LEAVES. SCROOGE PUTS HIS BAGS OF GOLD AND PAPERS AWAY. HE PICKS UP HIS HAT AND SCARF, PREPARING TO LEAVE. CHEERFUL VOICES ARE HEARD OFF STAGE.)

VOICE I: Merry Christmas to you!
VOICE II: And a Merry Christmas to you!
SCROOGE: (PUTS ON HIS HAT.) Bah!

(SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS DARKEN. MYSTERIOUS MOANING UNEARTHLY VOICES ARE HEARD FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS. EERIE MUSIC PLAYS UNDERNEATH THE VOICES.)

VOICES: Ebenezer . . . Ebeneeeeeezer . . . Scrooooooge . . .
Ebeneeeeeeeeezer . . . Scrooooooooooge
SCROOGE: (FEARFULLY.) What's that? Who's there?

– **END OF E-MAIL SEGMENT** –

There are 64 pages in the complete script