

Stage*scripts*

A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens

Adapted by James Reynard

with interactive additions by Julia Bennett

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Dickens Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls... friends, today we embark upon a theatrical journey; a journey that can involve us all. We implore your indulgence and patience, or to put it more bluntly, we crave your assistance in relating today's tale by creating the ambiance

Narrator 1 Let me. Would you like to help us make this play?
(Cast encourages audience to say yes) Alright then.
We need your help with sound effects. *To an audience member* If I was to say to this (lovely lady/ fine gent) here - don't worry, it's nothing very complicated [Sir/Madam], please pick a card, any card... would you mind sharing what it says with all of your friends? Ah (ghostly wails)!
(Ensemble loves this sound!) Ah, ghostly wailing! So, my friends in this section, can we hear some ghostly wails? Perhaps a bit louder? Excellent! Look for my cue in the course of the evening.

The Narrator ad-libs and repeats the process with all the other FX and sections of the audience; some FX may have props, such as th individual bell and clanking chains.

Dickens I believe it's time we have a short rehearsal, my friends.
(Like a conductor) Ghostly wails! Chiming bells! Howling wind! Festive cheer! *(beat)* Single bell. Superb!

Narrator 2 Now, we do have a small problem! A few of our troupe were unable to travel to Le Bois with us and we need a few brave souls to assist us! When there is an opportunity, one of our company will step to this location (or this location) and indicate by this sign. Simply stand quietly and join your able guide and they'll give you further instructions. Let's practice - Excellent! Now, are we all sitting comfortably? Let us begin...

Dickens Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls, we present, with great anticipation, wild elation, imaginative imagination, and your participation... the second greatest Christmas story ever told.

Fred 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.

Dickens That was in the building next door to the one where our story begins.

Narrator 3 Our tale starts at a counting-house with a sign on it saying: 'Scrooge And Marley'. Although the sign had two names, only one was still relevant as Jacob Marley had been dead, long dead, these seven years.

Ghostly off stage groans by the cast are heard.

Narrator 1 Ebenezer Scrooge had been his partner, his sole friend and after Marley's death his sole executor and sole mourner.

Narrator 3 There was no doubt that Jacob Marley was dead as a door-nail.

Narrator 2 Outside the building the wind blew, [▲] and the snow fell, while the good folk of the City of London scurried hither and thither, wishing each other season's greetings, purchasing last minute gifts, preparing for the forthcoming festivities.

Narrator 3 One man stood out from the crowd however; (*Scrooge appears*) a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous man of mean spirit. Hard and sharp as flint, cold as the snow he trudged through, the man had a temperature about him that did not thaw one degree at Christmas.

Scrooge Humbug, humbug...anybody want a humbug? (*He offers humbugs to audience*). Well you can't have any... they're mine!

Narrator The city clocks had only just gone three, [■] but it was quite dark already, and candles flared wildly in the windows of offices and homes. All, except one;

Narrator 2 the only light that came from the counting-house of Scrooge and Marley, was that of a minuscule fire, and a single candle on the desk of Bob Cratchit, the mild-mannered clerk who sat there. The back door to the counting house creaked open, [*Scrooge makes a creaking noise*] and the wind howled [▲] as Mr Ebenezer Scrooge entered the dark and dismal premises.

Narrator The front door opened again. Again the wind howled, [▲] briefly... as Scrooge's nephew,

Fred Fred

Narrator Entered.

Fred Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

Scrooge Bah, humbug!

Fred Christmas, a humbug, Uncle?

Scrooge What right, what reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough!

Fred What right, what reason have you to be dismal? You're rich enough!

Scrooge Bah... humbug.

Fred Don't be cross, Uncle.

Scrooge What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? What's Christmas but a time for paying bills without money; for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer? If I had my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own Christmas pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart; he should!

Fred *(Laughing)*. Oh Uncle! I shall keep my Christmas humor to the last. *(Beat)*. And so, a Merry Christmas to you, Uncle.

Scrooge Good afternoon.

Fred And a Merry Christmas to you, Bob Cratchit!

Scrooge Good afternoon, sir!

Bob A Merry Christmas to you too, Mr Fred.

Scrooge There's another fellow, fifteen shillings a week with a wife and family, talking about a Merry Christmas. Humbug!

Narrator As Fred left the counting house, the wind howled through the open door [▲]. To Scrooge's annoyance this was not the only thing that entered the premises.

Collector Good afternoon sir, have we the pleasure in addressing .. *
[Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?]

Scrooge Mr Marley has been dead seven years; he died seven years ago, this very night.

Collector We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner, do we? []. At this festive season of the year, Mr .. [Scrooge], it is more than usually desirable that we make some provision for the poor and destitute. [What can we put you down for?]

Scrooge Nothing.

Collector You wish to remain anonymous? []

Scrooge I wish to be left alone. I support the prisons and the workhouses, those who are badly off must go there.

Collector Many can't, and many [would rather die].

Scrooge Then they had better die, and decrease the surplus population. Good afternoon, sirs.

Collector Good [day].

Narrator Seeing clearly that..

Collector ...it would be useless to pursue the matter

Narrator the Collectors withdrew.

Narrator Once again the wind howled as the door was opened [▲]; this was accompanied by the sound of carol singers drifting into the dimly lit premises, illuminating Bob's gloomy spirits and infuriating Scrooge's.

Carol singers appear in Scrooge's doorway, singing:

Singer *On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me*

Twelve drummers drumming,

Eleven pipers piping,

Ten lords a-leaping,

Nine ladies dancing,

Eight maids a-milking,

Seven swans a-swimming,

Six geese a-laying,

Five golden rings,

Four calling birds,

Three French hens,

Two turtle doves,

And a partridge in a pear tree!

Scrooge Bog off!

Singer BOGOF? That's right, it's a BOGOF! There's a special offer on carols tonight, buy one, get one free! *(The Singer encourages the audience to sing)*. Come on gang *(Getting audience members to join in)*

We wish you a merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas

And a happy New Year.

Glad tidings we bring

To you and your kin;

Glad tidings for Christmas (or 'We wish you a merry Christmas')

And a happy New Year!

Scrooge *(Furiously)*. Get out!

Narrator Scrooge slammed the door with such energy of action that the singer fled in terror. It was more than an hour before Scrooge addressed his shivering clerk.

Scrooge You'll be wanting all day off tomorrow, I suppose?

Bob If it's convenient, sir.

Scrooge It is not convenient, and it is not fair; if I was to stop you half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, and yet you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

Bob It's only once a year, sir.

Scrooge A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December. Be here all the earlier next morning.

Narrator Promising that he would, Bob Cratchit opened the door into the howling wind, [▲] and having bade his employer a...

Bob Merry Christmas,

Narrator ... he left with the words...

Scrooge Humbug, humbug,

Narrator ... ringing in his ears. *(Bob exits)*.

Ebenezer Scrooge locked up the counting house, and made his way home through the snowy streets of London to the chambers, which had once belonged to his deceased partner. His premises were old and gloomy, and the fog and frost hung mournfully about the black gateway of the house. *(Marley's face appears as the door knocker)*. As he put his key in the lock of his front door, his eyes fell upon the large but unremarkable door-knocker in front of him. He was mildly shaken, though not too stirred, to see the ghostly motionless face of his ex-partner, Jacob Marley, staring back at him in place of the knocker. The face was not angry or ferocious, but the hair was curiously wild and the wide, open eyes were perfectly still. As Scrooge approached and looked fixedly at it, the phenomenon became a knocker again.

(Marley's face disappears).

Scrooge Humbug

Narrator Scrooge threw the door open and entered his cold dark abode. Darkness was cheap..

Scrooge And Scrooge liked it.

Narrator He walked through all his rooms, though not before cautiously looking at the back of the door, as if expecting to see Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. He also locked himself in; double locked himself in which was not his custom, and was only then satisfied he was alone. Thus secured against surprise, he went to put on his dressing gown, slippers and nightcap.

Narrator Once changed, he settled down before a meagre fire. As he sat back, he glanced at a bell that hung in the room. It was a disused bell, used for some purpose now long forgotten, and it was to his great astonishment, that this bell now began to swing.

Narrator Soon it rang loudly, as did every bell in the house. [▲] The ringing ended as suddenly as it had begun.

Scrooge Humbug...

Narrator His colour quickly changed when the bells were succeeded by the clankings and clinkings of chains [■], and ghostly wails [▲], until a figure passed through the heavy door to the room where Scrooge stood quivering. It was a figure Scrooge knew well... Jacob Marley!

Scrooge What do you want with me

Marley Much. In life, I was your partner Jacob Marley

Scrooge Bah, Humbug!

Marley You don't believe in me?

Scrooge I don't. Humbug, I tell you, Humbug!

Narrator The ghost shook its chains violently, [■] and raised a fearful cry. To Scrooge's horror, the phantom untied the bandage round its head and its lower jaw dropped upon its breast.

Marley raises a fearful cry.

Scrooge Mercy, dreadful apparition! Why do you trouble me?

Marley It is required that the spirit within every man should walk among his fellow men; and if he does not do so in life, he is condemned to do so after death, and witness what he cannot share. In life my spirit never went beyond our counting-house, in death, weary journeys lie ahead.

Scrooge But why are you fettered so?

Marley I wear the chains I forged in life; is its pattern strange to you? The chains you wear were as heavy and long as these seven Christmas Eves ago. It is a ponderous chain.

Scrooge But why do you come to me now? Tell me more, Jacob, speak comfort to me.

Marley I have none to give...You will be haunted by three Spirits.

Scrooge I... I think I'd rather not.

Marley Ebenezer, this is a special offer, spurn it not. Expect the first tomorrow when the clock tolls one, the second the next night at two, and the third the night after when the last stroke of twelve sounds. The chimes of the clock will play their tunes, then, strike the hour.

Scrooge Couldn't I take them all at once and get them over with, Jacob?

Marley Farewell Ebenezer, farewell. (*Marley exits*).

Narrator As Marley's ghost left to the sound of clinking and clanking chains, [▲], and ghostly wails, [▲], Scrooge found that try as he might, he could not say...

Scrooge Hum... Hum... Hum...

Narrator ...bug, again. He retired to the comfort of his chair, the emotion of the last hour causing him to fall asleep on the instant.

Narrator His slumber was to be short lived, for a few moments later he awoke with a start, to hear the quarterly chimes of the neighboring church clock, and the ominous single sound of the bell striking one [■].

Narrator Of a sudden the room was bathed in light, to the accompaniment of gentle ghostly wails, [▲] Scrooge found himself staring into the eyes of a figure both distinct and clear. It was like a child, yet not a child; like an old man, yet not an old man.

Scrooge Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold me?

Xmas Past I am.

Scrooge Who, and what are you?

Xmas Past I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Scrooge Long past?

Past No, your past.

Scrooge Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

Ghost I am!

Scrooge Who, and what are you?

Ghost I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Scrooge Long Past?

Ghost No. Your past.

Scrooge Why are you here?

Ghost Your reclamation. Rise! and walk with me!"

Narrator As Scrooge rose and took the figure's hand, the walls of his room and indeed the city around the counting-house vanished. He found himself looking at a place he knew, a dull red brick schoolhouse, with scores of boys leaving for the holidays, all full of festive mirth and cheer, all shouting: "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!". [●].

Xmas Past You recollect?

Scrooge I was bred in this place; I was a boy here! (*He gazes at the scene*). Spirit, how is it that they see us not?

Xmas Past These are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us. But the school is not quite deserted, a solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

Scrooge Spirit; I know who he is, Spirit, I know. Let us leave this place.

Narrator The ghost took him on a journey through many a Christmas past; the solitary figure continually left alone at the school, year on year.

Narrator Until one year, when a coach was sent to bring him home. Home, to a happier house than the one he had been sent from as a small child. Home, to a father, much kinder now than he had used to be. He was home. Home, to an excitable younger sister, who put her arms around him and kissed him, and addressed him as her...

Fan Dear, dear Brother Ebenezer! We are to be together all Christmas long and have the merriest time in all the world.

Scrooge She was quite, quite special, was Little Fan.

Xmas Past A delicate creature with a large heart; she died a woman and had, as I think, children.

Scrooge One child.

Xmas Past True, your nephew.

Scrooge Yes.

Narrator The scene changed, and Scrooge found himself looking in on a crowded works party, with dances, songs and festive mirth. [▲].

Scrooge I know this place! I was apprenticed here! And...why it's dear old Fezziwig! It's Fezziwig alive again!

Fezziwig Yo ho there, Ebenezer! *(To a member of the audience)*. Yo ho, Dick!

Scrooge Goodness, 'tis Dick Wilkins, to be sure!

Fezziwig No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, boys; let's have some room here; hilli-ho, Dick, chirrup Ebenezer! Let's have some Christmas cheer! [▲].

Scrooge I never heard a bad word spoken against him, there was nothing but praise; and he knew how to show folk a cheerful time!

Xmas Past The small sum of three or four pounds to make these silly folk so full of gratitude; *(Seeing Scrooge is troubled)*. What is the matter?

Scrooge There were carol singers at my door this afternoon; I should have liked to have given them something.

Past My time grows short; let us see another Christmas.

Narrator Scrooge now saw himself a few years older, a man in the prime of his life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years, but it had begun to wear the signs of care and greed. He was not alone, but standing with a very beautiful girl; now just a distant memory. Scrooge uttered a name...

Scrooge Belle... Belle...

The following words are from the past and spoken as such: he can look at her, but she should not be aware or see him.

Belle It matters little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer you and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

Scrooge What idol has displaced you?

Belle A golden one.

Scrooge I am not changed towards you, am I?

Belle Our contract was made when we were both poor and content to be so.

Scrooge I was a boy

Belle You were another man. Tell me, would you seek and try to win me now?

Scrooge You think not.

Belle I would gladly think otherwise, but you would choose a dowerless girl now? You, who weigh everything by gain. I release you/ I release you with a full heart, for the love of him you once were. May you be happy in the life you have chosen, Ebenezer. *(She exits).*

Scrooge I wish...

Xmas Past What is it?

Scrooge I wish ... I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now, that's all. Spirit, remove me from this place, haunt me no longer.

Narrator As the ghost faded away, Scrooge sank into a heavy and exhausted sleep. He had no idea that when he rose again, his room would have been converted. He awoke in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and while gathering his thoughts, froze when he heard the chimes of the clock as the bell struck two. [■]

Narrator Leaping up from the comfort of his chair, Scrooge observed that his chamber was filled with

C1 holly and mistletoe,

C2 turkeys, geese, sucking-pigs,

C3 long wreaths of sausages,

C4 red-hot chestnuts

C5 plum-puddings, mince-pies,

C6 cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges

C7 and all other manner of Christmas fayre

Scrooge seething bowls of punch.

Narrator And there, In easy state upon this couch, sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see.

Ghost Come in! Come in! and know me better, man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me. You have never seen the like of me before.

Scrooge Never

Ghost Never walked forth with my brothers born in these later years?

Scrooge I am afraid I have not. Have you many, Spirit?"

Ghost More than eighteen hundred

Scrooge A tremendous family to provide for! Spirit, conduct me where you will. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

Ghost Touch my robe!

Narrator Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

Narrator The room vanished, and they were on the city streets on Christmas morn. He watched as the Spirit went towards where people quarrelled (*Present ventures into the audience*), and from its torch it sprinkled a few drops of water. Humour was restored immediately, and the people went on their way saying

Quarreler [*prompting*] 'Isn't it a shame to quarrel on Christmas day?' [*Spect replies*]

Present Yes, it is a shame to quarrel on Christmas day.

Narrator The next moment they were at the house of Bob Cratchit, where they heard the sounds of Christmas merriment. [▲]. The atmosphere had an effect on Scrooge who wondered

Scrooge how the seven Cratchits could get by all on fifteen shillings a week.

Narrator On Bob sat his youngest child, the sickly Tiny Tim, giggling with joy as the family now played hide and seek.

Bob Merry Christmas to us all my dears, God bless us!

Tiny Tim God bless us, every one!

Scrooge Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live?

Present I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.

Scrooge No, no, kind Spirit, say he will be spared!

Present If these shadows remain unaltered, none other of my race will find him here.

Bob Raise your glasses all... I give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast.

Mrs C The founder of the feast indeed! I wish I had him here, I'd give him a good piece of my mind to feast upon!

Bob My dear, the children; Christmas day.

Mrs. C It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks the health of such a stingy unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert!

Bob My dear. Christmas Day.

Mrs. C I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's, not for his. Long life to him. Everyone... to Mr Scrooge, the founder of the feast! [●].

Narrator The toast was drunk, though with little heartiness in it. Tiny Tim didn't care tuppence for it.

Tim Mr. Scrooge is an ogre.

Narrator But they were happy,

Scrooge contented

Narrator and when they faded in the bright sprinklings of the spirits torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye on Tiny Tim until the last.

(During the following Present and Scrooge journey round the auditorium).

- Company The wind whistled about them [▲],
- C 2 The spirit led Scrooge through towns, villages, hamlets;
- C 3 through house after house
- C 4 each one with a Christmas tune or thought regardless of circumstance.
- Scrooge What place is this?
- Present A place where miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth; but see, they know me.
- Narrator The Spirit and Scrooge watched as the miners sat round a glowing fire singing carols. *(Encourages the audience to sing).*
- Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen.
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night
Though the frost was cruel.
When a poor man came in sight
Gath'ring winter fuel.*
- Narrator Then, as suddenly as they had ventured out into places far away, they were back in London town, in a gleaming room, with the sound of laughter coming ever nearer. Scrooge recognised the laugh and knew it well, but it was normally to his irritation.
- Fred He said that Christmas was a humbug! He believed it too! He's a comical old fellow, and not so pleasant as he might be; however his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him. But, enough of that for now, 'tis time for our next game.

(To the audience). Now then, this is how the game works; I think of something, and to your questions, I can answer only yes or no! For example, if I think of a Christmas pudding, you might say, is it alive, and I would say 'No'; you might then ask 'is it a type of food?' and I would say 'Yes'. And the game continues like that until you get the answer. Now, who has the first question?

The actor playing Fred, and the Narrator if need be, improvises with the audience, leading them to ask questions. The answer is of course: Scrooge.

That's right... Uncle Scrooge! A Merry Christmas to him wherever he is; he wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!

(Fred gets the audience to toast Scrooge too).

Narrator The Ghost and the visions faded as church bell struck twelve [■].

Narrator As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, Scrooge remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn phantom, draped and hooded, emerging like a mist from the ground.

The Ghost of Christmas Future rises behind Scrooge.

Scrooge Am I in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come? You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not yet happened, but will happen in the time before us? Is that so, Spirit?

Narrator The Phantom pointed downwards with its hand and two figures emerged from the foggy gloom. Scrooge knew them and advanced to listen to their talk.

Man 1 I don't know much about it, either way. I only know, Old Scratch is dead. When did he die?

Spect [Last night, I believe].

Man 2 It's likely to be a very cheap funeral, yes? [*] Upon my life, I don't know of anybody to go to it, do you? [*] Cold, isn't it? [*]

Man 1 Seasonable though for Christmas time.

Narrator That was their meeting, their conversation and their parting. Quiet and dark beside him, the phantom stood motionless as Scrooge then observed two charwomen come out from the darkness.

Woman 1 Did you get his shirt or his bed-curtains, Bess? I got his [bed-curtains, rings and all. OR shirt, the best he had.] They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for us. Can you imagine? [*] .

Woman 2 Wasn't he a frightful one? [*] He frightened everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! *Laughter, exiting.*

Scrooge Spirit, I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own! My life tends that way now. Merciful Heaven, what is this!

Narrator The scene had changed. The room was dark, too dark, but he perceived a bare, un-curtained bed. Beneath a ragged shroud, Scrooge saw the outline of a figure;

Company unwatched

C 2 unwept

C 3 uncared for

Narrator lying beneath the sheet. Scrooge wondered who it might be.

Scrooge Spirit, I have no more power to withdraw that veil than I have to dismiss you. This is a fearful place; in leaving it I shall not forget its lesson; trust me. None mourn this man I can see. Let us go!

Narrator As Scrooge turned, he heard a familiar voice.

Bob Cratchit enters; he wears an indication of mourning such as a black frock coat or arm band and reads as though mid speech at a funeral.

Bob I have often walked with him upon my shoulder and been greeted by many a person. However and whenever we part from one another, let us promise that none of us forget Tiny Tim. When we recollect how patient and mild our boy was, let us not quarrel easily among ourselves. We shall none of us forget our Tiny Tim. *(He exits).*

Scrooge Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead, and let me behold what I shall be, in days to come?

Narrator Scrooge felt a cold chill run down his spine, and when he turned he found himself in a churchyard, overrun by grass and weeds; a neglected grave stood out forlornly.

Scrooge Before I draw nearer to that stone at which you gaze, answer me one question. Were these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be?

Narrator Still the Ghost gazed down at the grave, immovable as ever. Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave...

Scrooge Ebenezer Scrooge! Am I that man who lay upon the bed? No, Spirit, no! I am not the man I was; I will not be the man I must have been! Why show me this, if I am past all hope? I will honour Christmas in my heart, and live in the Past, Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all three shall strive within me! Oh, tell me how I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

Narrator In his agony Ebenezer Scrooge fell, and as the Spectre faded, he became aware of his own chair, his own room and best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own, to make amends in.

Scrooge Oh, Jacob Marley and Christmas be praised! I will live in the Past, the Present and the Future! The Spirits of all three shall strive within me! I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees! I don't know what to do, I am as light as a feather, I am as merry as a schoolboy, I am as giddy as a drunken man.

Narrator He was checked in his joy by the sounds of church bells ringing, [▲], and, running to the window, he opened it and looked out.

Scrooge *(To an audience member)*. You there! Yes, you! What is today my fine fellow? What day is it?

Ad-libs should be used, if needs be, to prompt the audience member to ultimately say "It's Christmas Day!".

Scrooge It's Christmas day? It's Christmas day! I haven't missed it, the Spirits have done it all in one night! Listen my fine fellow, go and see if the prize turkey still hangs at the Poulterer's, if so, buy it and deliver it to Bob Cratchit's house; here, take this half-a-crown! *(He gives a giant chocolate coin to the audience member)*. Bob shan't know who sent it; it'll be twice the size of Tiny Tim! I wonder how Mrs Cratchit will get it ready by supper-time! *(He exits to change)*.

Narrator Scrooge dressed himself all in his best, after shaving with a trembling hand. Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand shook continuously;

Narrator shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance whilst doing it.

Narrator But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a bit of sticking plaster over it, and been quite satisfied.
(Enter Scrooge).

Narrator Then he left his premises, patting the door-knocker that had heralded the previous night's events as he went, and walked out into the streets of London.

Scrooge goes into audience, shaking hands and doffing his hat.

Scrooge Merry Christmas sir; Merry Christmas madam! Merry Christmas to you all!

Narrator He dined with his nephew, Fred, for whom nothing could be more wonderful, and the following day, he waited at the counting-house of Scrooge And Marley. His clerk was late, full eighteen and a half minutes behind his time.

Enter Bob.

Scrooge What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

Bob Its only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated; I... I...was, er, making rather merry yesterday.

Scrooge Now, I tell you what, my friend, I am not going to stand for this any longer. And therefore... and therefore... I'll raise your salary, my friend, and I shall endeavour to assist your struggling family. We will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop! A Merry Christmas, Bob, my good fellow! A Merrier Christmas than I have given you for many a year.

Exit Scrooge and Bob. The company then enter during the following, Scrooge last.

Company 1 Scrooge was better than his word.

C 2 He did everything that he had promised the final Spirit.

C 3 And, to Tiny Tim,

Tim who did not die,

C 3 he was a second father.

C 4 Some people laughed to see the alteration in him

Scrooge he let them laugh, and he heeded them little;

C 5 his own heart laughed, and that was quite enough for him.

C 6 It was always said of Ebenezer Scrooge from that
Christmas Day onwards

C 7 that if any man alive possessed the knowledge

C 8 it was he that knew how to keep Christmas well.

C 9 And, as he pondered his new life, he fancied he could
hear Tiny Tim's observation echoing round the streets
of old London town:

Tim God Bless Us, Every One!

Scrooge Everyone!

Company *We wish you a merry Christmas*

We wish you a merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas

And a happy New Year.

Glad tidings we bring

To you and your kin;

*Glad tidings for Christmas (or 'We wish you a merry
Christmas')*

And a happy New Year!

Calls, then fade to black.

THE END

ROYALTY FEES

A royalty fee is payable every time 'A Christmas Carol adapted by James Reynard' is performed in front of an audience irrespective of whether that audience pays for attending or not. Producing organisations **MUST** obtain a 'Licence To Perform' from Stagescripts Ltd prior to starting rehearsals.

Producing Organisations are prohibited from making video recordings of rehearsals or performances of 'A Christmas Carol adapted by James Reynard' without the prior permission of Stagescripts Ltd or their agent.

NOTE : The act of preparing material in quantities sufficient to rehearse a performance of 'A Christmas Carol adapted by James Reynard' will be taken as intent to stage such a performance should litigation be necessary in the event of non-payment of Royalty Fees later

found to be due.

SE-0427 Rev A

Characters

The play has a minimum cast of five...

- Ebenezer Scrooge
- Narrator (could be Dickens) / Mr Fezziwig
- Bob Cratchit / Ghost of Christmas Past
- Fred / Mrs Cratchit / Belle / Carol Singer
- Collector / Jacob Marley / Ghost of Christmas Present

In addition, there are two roles that were played in the premiere production by puppets.

- Ghost of Christmas Future (non-speaking)
- Tiny Tim (just one line)

Production Notes

The play begins with an ad-lib introduction by the Narrator explaining to the audience about their involvement. Envelopes can be handed out with basic instructions for them, suggesting sound effects such as: ghostly wails; howling wind; bells; individual bell chimes; carol singing; clanking of chains and festive merriment. Towards the end, two (or four) members of the audience can join the cast and say a few lines as characters. Cast members should encourage the audience to repeat certain lines, and also join in the game that Fred plays. The actors may also be required to 'ad-lib' at times. The audience must not feel forced into taking part but should be encouraged to participate, almost in Music Hall or Pantomime style. The audience members will probably be in rows, so a whole row could be the wind or bells etc; alternatively, if they are at tables, each one could be a sound effect. The audience could use 'real' props, such as a bell for tolling, or clanking chains.

The play is designed so that it can be performed with or without audience participation and a director might wish to have more than five cast members, as there are twenty-two characters. Tiny Tim and the Ghost of Christmas Future could also be performed by actors, as can the man and woman in the street, and the boy Scrooge talks to at the end, making twenty-six characters in all.

Extra sound effects might also be considered. For example, when the narrator says: “...the greatest story ever told...” a clap of thunder with lightning might occur. This could happen at other times for comic effect during the opening section; however, although the emphasis is on audience enjoyment and Christmas merriment at the beginning, as the play progresses, the sentiment of Dickens’ tale should perhaps take over.

Depending on the audience reaction and involvement the play lasts between 30 and 40 minutes. The longer version of this script of ‘A Christmas Carol’ contains more information regarding its first professional production and may be of interest when putting on the shorter one.

The following abbreviations in the script indicate audience sound effects and involvement

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|---|--|
| <p>▲ Sections Of Audience: [S
A]</p> <p>➤ 1) Howling wind</p> <p>➤ 2) Bells chiming</p> <p>➤ 3) Ghostly wails</p> <p>➤ 4) Clanking chains</p> <p>➤ 5) Sounds of Festive
Mirth</p> | <p>➤ 1) Carol singing</p> <p>➤ 2) Fred’s guessing game</p> <p>■ Individual audience: [I
A]</p> <p>➤ 1) Single clock chimes</p> <p>➤ 2) Charwomen/Men in
street</p> <p>➤ 3) ‘Boy’ responding to
Scrooge</p> |
|---|--|

- Whole audience: [W A]