

**A
CHRISTMAS
CAROL
The Pantomime**

Loosely based on
Charles Dickens'
"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

by Nigel Holmes

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL - The Pantomime

CAST LIST

SCROOGE: (Ebenezer) A grumpy miser and skinflint.

BOB CRATCHIT: Scrooge's office clerk.

MRS EMILY CRATCHIT: The pantomime dame. Played by a man in dame style.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: Eldest daughter. Works as an apprentice milliner.

BELINDA CRATCHIT: Second daughter.

PETER CRATCHIT: Son and heir.

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: Unnamed boy.

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: Unnamed girl

TINY TIM CRATCHIT: Youngest son. Has braces on his legs. Uses a crutch.

NEPHEW FRED: Scrooge's nephew.

MR FLAGGON: A charity worker.

MARLEY'S GHOST: Dressed in white or grey but in "Rasta" style. Speaks with an over the top fake Jamaican accent.

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME (FUTURE): Non speaking part.

SCHOOLMASTER:

YOUNG SCROOGE: Scrooge as a schoolboy.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Scrooge as a teenager.

BELL: Scrooge's first love. Teenager.

LITTLE FAN: Scrooge's sister.

OLD FEZZIWIG: Scrooge's first employer. A round and jolly man.

PARTY GUEST:

MR SMITH: Business associate.

MR JONES: Business Associate.

CHARWOMAN:

LAUNDRESS:

UNDERTAKER:

OL' JOE: Rag and bone merchant, or second hand dealer.

ACT I SCENE 1: SCROOGE AND MARLEY'S COUNTING HOUSE.

THE INTERIOR OF AN OFFICE TO ONE SIDE,
WITH LIVING QUARTERS ON THE OTHER. BOTH
ARE DARK AND DINGY.

AS THE MAIN TABS OPEN THE ENSEMBLE IS
DANCING AND SINGING. BOB CRATCHIT IS AT
HIS WORKPLACE, BUT JOINING IN WITH THE
FUN.

MUSICAL PRODUCTION NUMBER. The Ensemble.

*SUGGESTION: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing. Traditional. (Perhaps an
uptempo version.)*

AT THE END OF THE PRODUCTION NUMBER
SCROOGE STORMS IN AND MAKES EVERYBODY
STOP.

SCROOGE: Stop this caterwauling. Stop it I say. What's going
on? Who are you people? This is a serious
workplace. A counting house. Not a place for
frivolous rowdy enjoyment. Out! Out I say!

MR FLAGGON COMES FORWARD FROM THE
ENSEMBLE.

MR FLAGGON: (BRIGHTLY, WHILE DOFFING HAT.) Good day Sir. We are
singing carols on behalf of the poor and destitute of
this parish.

SCROOGE: Poor and destitute? Poor and destitute you say?
Humbug! When I was a child we were so poor that my
parents got my cloths from the Army Surplus Store. I
spent two years of my life going to school as a
Japanese Admiral.

MR FLAGGON: The sign above the door says Scrooge and Marley Am I
addressing Mr Marley?

SCROOGE: Marley is no longer of this world. He's been dead
these past seven years. He died this very night.
The night you call Christmas Eve.

MR FLAGGON: (BRIGHTLY.) Then you can only be the young, the
handsome, the charitable, Mr Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Young you say? (PREENING.) I may not be as young as
I used to be, yet I would certainly agree there is a
rugged handsomeness about these cheek bones.

MR FLAGGON ABRUPTLY PRODUCES A DONATION
TIN AND SHAKES IT IN SCROOGE'S FACE.
SCROOGE JUMPS BACK AS IF ASSAULTED.

SCROOGE: WHAT! What is this? You come in here with your
stupid harking and heralding song, trying to mug
honest people with your slotted tins. Be off with
you I say.

MR FLAGGON: Perhaps another carol Mr Scrooge? To get you in the
Christmas spirit.

SCROOGE: Christmas spirit? CHRISTMAS SPIRIT YOU SAY! Humbug
I say! Humbug to your Christmas. A day made to rob
honest businessmen of their money. Humbug! Bah!
Humbug!

SCROOGE:

(CHASING THEM OUT.) Out! All of you! Out I say.
And take your Merry Christmas with you.

THE ENSEMBLE AND MR FLAGGON EXIT,
LEAVING ONLY BOB CRATCHIT AND SCROOGE.

SCROOGE:

(DIRECTLY TO AUDIENCE.) And you people. What are
you doing in here anyway? You'll be expecting old
age pensioners discounted tickets next.

BOB CRATCHIT:

Excuse me Mr Scrooge Sir.

SCROOGE:

What is it Scratchit?

BOB CRATCHIT:

Cratchit Sir. It's Cratchit with a C.

SCROOGE:

Whatever! So what is it Scratchit?

BOB CRATCHIT:

Cratchit Sir. Tomorrow? I wondered if I might...?

SCROOGE:

You wondered if you might have the day off. For your
Christmas, Eh Scratchit?

BOB CRATCHIT:

Well Sir, it's the children you see. And Mrs
CRATCHIT. (EMPHASISING NAME.)

SCROOGE:

Robbery! Daylight robbery. I expect you'll still
want paying for all the work you're NOT going to do?

BOB CRATCHIT:

It is only once a year Sir. Christmas.

SCROOGE:

(TO AUDIENCE.) What do you think? Should Scratchit
have Christmas day off?

BOB CRATCHIT:

(ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE.) Oh yes he should.

SCROOGE:

Oh no he shouldn't.

BOB CRATCHIT:

(ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE.) Oh yes he should.

SCROOGE:

Oh no he shouldn't.

BOB CRATCHIT:

I'll come in extra early the next day Mr Scrooge Sir.

SCROOGE:

Indeed you will young Scratchit. Indeed you will.
And we can only be thankful that this Charles Dickens
fellow hasn't invented Boxing Day yet. You'd want
that off too.

(TURNING ON AUDIENCE.) Did I hear someone boo? Yes,
boo a poor old man would you? Well I just hope that
your own employers are not as generous as myself and
YOU don't get Christmas day off.

Humbug I say. Humbug.

SCROOGE EXITS.

BOB CRATCHIT:

(DIRECT TO AUDIENCE.) He's not so bad really.
Sometimes, on really cold days, he even lets me bring
in my own coal.

Before this, I worked in a calendar factory. Yes a
calendar factory. But they sacked me because I took
a day off.

BOB CRATCHIT:

I need to keep this job with Mr Scrooge You see there's no welfare state, no National Health Service and only the workhouse if we can't pay our way. I have six children to support. Two of each kind.

Yes, six. We must stop, but it's just that Mrs Cratchit is so lovely, I can't resist her during these cold nights.

EMILY CRATCHIT BOUNCES IN.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Are you talking about me lover boy.

BOB CRATCHIT: Hello my precious. This is my wife everybody. Emily Cratchit.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Hello everyone. Come on, you're allowed to reply. Hello everyone (AUDIENCE RESPONSE.)

BOB CRATCHIT: Why are you at my place of work sweetness?

EMILY CRATCHIT: It's Christmas Eve lover boy and I've come to take you home. That's if that evil miser Ebenezer Scrooge can do without you since it's half an hour past the end of your working day.

BOB CRATCHIT: I like to give value for money my precious.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Don't you "my precious" me. Get yourself home this instant. Shoo! And on your way home, take Tiny Tim to the butchers.

BOB CRATCHIT: I fear there's not much meat on him my love.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Not for the butcher's slab you silly boy. To make Mr Chops the butcher have some sympathy for us. Or else our Christmas dinner could end up as a bit of dripping on some scrag end.

BOB CRATCHIT EXITS.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (DIRECT TO AUDIENCE.) Hello everyone. I'm Emily Cratchit. Married to the lovely Bob Cratchit. But you already know that.

My Bob loves this womanly figure. Mind you, I've worked out that eating chocolate makes your clothes shrink.

I may be slightly over weight but I identify as skinny. That means I'm trans-slender.

Actually you know you're putting on weight when you have to hang your knickers on the line using three pegs.

So let's have a look at you lot. Look at all the posh ones in the front row. You can smell the Chanel Number Five from here. Come on, who came along thinking you were going to get educated with a bit of Charles Dickens? You can always tell the educated university types. All elbow patches and stubby beards. And that's just the ladies.

EMILY CRATCHIT TAKES OUT A FALSE BEARD AND PUTS IT ON.

Musical number. Emily Cratchit and the ensemble.

Suggestion: "This is me." From the Greatest Showman.

AFTER THE FIRST VERSE, THE ENSEMBLE
ENTER ALL WEARING BEARDS.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Who likes Christmas?

THE ENSEMBLE CHEER.

EMILY CRATCHIT: What about the kiddies in the audience? Who likes
Christmas?

I just love Christmas. We can't afford presents but
me and Mr Crachit buy all our children a real treat
every year. A Brazil nut. Yes! One each.

My little boy said he wanted one of those baseball
caps where they have the peak at the back. We
couldn't find one anywhere.

Last year I let my lovely husband have something he's
been wanting for ages. No not Mrs Prendagast from
Station Road. Ever since we became man and wife he's
been begging me to do this for him. - So last
Christmas I finally relented and whitewashed the
kitchen.

Anyway I'd better go. If I stay here any longer that
Mr Scrooge will have me behind his desk. See you
later my lovelies.

EMILY CRATCHIT EXITS.

MR SCROOGE ENTERS DRESSED IN HIS NIGHT
CLOTHES.

SCROOGE: (TO ENSEMBLE.) What are you doing in my bed chamber?
Can't a poor man have some privacy? Get out I say.

THE ENSEMBLE EXIT.

SCROOGE: (TO AUDIENCE.) And what are you looking at? Haven't
you seen a man in fashionable nightwear before. Not
quite David Beckham in his pants, but I know quite a
few of you ladies will be enjoying the view. (HE
STANDS IN A COMICAL SEXY POSE.)

Enough! Enough of this frivolity I say. Life is not
for fun. Life is hard. Life has to be taken by the
scruff of the neck and twisted until every little
penny gets screwed from it. Only then can a man
gather enough riches around him to enjoy life.

My business partner, Jacob Marley, died before he
managed to build enough wealth. But not me! I
intend to hold on to every lovely penny that trickles
through these gnarled fingers.

Right! Just my final checks before bed. Windows
locked. Seats upright and doors set to manual.
(LIFTING THE MATTRESS SLIGHTLY) Money in a safe
place. (LOOKING UNDER THE BED.) Night time "comfort
receptacle" in place. Porcelain you know. With a
picture of the King's head to aim at.

SCROOGE GETS INTO BED.

SCROOGE: And I'll thank you people to keep quiet while I get my beauty sleep. If you hear snoring it will be her in the front row.

SCROOGE PINCHES OUT THE CANDLE (LIGHTS DIM) AND PULLS THE COVERS TOTALLY OVER HIMSELF.

A CLOCK IS HEARD CHIMING, FOLLOWED BY THE SOUND OF RATTLING CHAINS

SCROOGE ABRUPTLY THROWS THE BLANKETS OFF AND SITS UP IN BED LOOKING STARTLED.

SCROOGE: What was that? Was it one of you people? I told you to be quiet. Who's rustling noisy sweet papers?

SCROOGE PULLS THE BLANKET FULLY OVER HIMSELF BUT REMAINS SITTING UP.

THE CHAINS ARE HEARD RATTLING AGAIN. SCROOGE ARRANGES THE COVERS OVER HIS HEAD LIKE A HOOD OR SHAWL, LEAVING ONLY HIS FACE UNCOVERED, PINCHED AT THE NECK.

SCROOGE: Stop it. Whoever it is. Stop it I say.

THE CHAINS RATTLE AGAIN. SCROOGE GETS OUT OF BED. STILL WITH THE BLANKET AROUND HIS HEAD WITH JUST HIS FACE SHOWING. HE LOOKS AROUND INQUISITIVELY.

SCROOGE: Obviously I don't believe in ghosts, but... You would tell me if you saw a ghost wouldn't you?

THE CHAINS RATTLE AGAIN AND THE GHOST OF MARLEY ENTERS BEHIND SCROOGE. MARLEY IS COVERED IN THE TRADITIONAL WHITE SHEET.

SCROOGE: What are you pointing at? A ghost? What? Behind me? I don't believe you. Shall I look?

SCROOGE WALKS AROUND IN A CIRCLE AND MARLEY'S GHOST FOLLOWS BEHIND UNSEEN BY SCROOGE.

SCROOGE: There! No ghost. What? Still behind me. I'll look again.

SCROOGE AND MARLEY'S GHOST REPEAT THE WALK BUT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

SCROOGE: Ghosts don't exist I say. What? You want me to look behind me? Okay, I'll do it one last time.

SCROOGE SPINS ON THE SPOT AND SEES MARLEY'S GHOST. HE SCREAMS "AHHHHGH" AND RUNS AWAY INTO THE WINGS. MARLEY'S GHOST STAYS PUT. SCROOGE RE-ENTERS, RUNS RIGHT ACROSS THE STAGE SCREAMING AND EXITS ON THE OTHER SIDE. MARLEY'S GHOST WATCHES HIM GO PAST.

SCROOGE ENTERS AGAIN BUT HESITANTLY.

MARLEY'S GHOST REMOVES THE SHEET AND IS REVEALED, DRESSED IN REGGAE STYLED CLOTHES BUT WITH NO COLOUR.

MAINLY WHITE OR GREY. REGGAE MUSIC
STARTS TO FADE UP AND MARLEY MOVES TO
THE BEAT.

SCROOGE: Are you a real ghost?

MARLEY'S GHOST: (RASTER STYLE.) Yeedy yaahde yeah man!

SCROOGE: What?

MARLEY'S GHOST: Right on brother!

SCROOGE: Shouldn't you be chasing me?

MARLEY'S GHOST: Chill man. Like, too much 'dat running stuff.

SCROOGE: How did you get in here?

MARLEY'S GHOST: Me man? Something else eh? I shimmied right through 'dat wall. Like a dream man. Floating on a puff.

SCROOGE: Who are you?

MARLEY'S GHOST: Hey me man? I'm like, Marley's ghost.

SCROOGE: A ghost you say. Well I don't believe in ghosts. I'm obviously dreaming. You're probably just indigestion. Something disagreeably I had for supper causing me to dream. Go away.

MARLEY'S GHOST DANCES A LITTLE TO THE
REGGAE MUSIC.

MARLEY'S GHOST: All-right! We's playing der vibe.

SCROOGE: And keep that racket down. It's enough to wake the dead.

MARLEY'S GHOST: Brother you got the point man. Wake the dead. Dead. Right on? Me! Dead. I'm like, the ghosty-whosty of the cat I once was.

SCROOGE: (SIGHING.) Okay, I'll play along. You're a ghost. You're dead. So who were you?

MARLEY'S GHOST: (PROUDLY.) Marley! I'm Marley man. I ain't gonna lie - I be smoother than apple pie. Everybody like, brother I am 'dat bad ghost of Marley.

SCROOGE: Marley? What? My old partner Jacob Marley? You don't look a thing like him.

MARLEY'S GHOST: It's like no man. Not Jacob Marley. That cat was busy tonight. He sent me man. He's long lost skank brother... Bob Marley.

SCROOGE: Bob Marley? Never heard of you.

MARLEY'S GHOST: You heard of Jamming man?

SCROOGE: Jam? Strawberry jam? Your people make jam?

MARLEY'S GHOST: My people like, make music.

SCROOGE: You play the harpsichord?

MARLEY'S GHOST: No! Jamming. Skank. Ganja. Reggae.

SCROOGE: Reggie? I thought you said you were Bob.

MARLEY'S GHOST: All-right man listen up. I'm sending you on this weird ghost'y trip.

SCROOGE: I'm not taking any of those hallucinogenic drugs.

MARLEY'S GHOST: No bad voodoo brother. A ghost'y trip.

SCROOGE: I'm not sure I want that either.

MARLEY'S GHOST: You ain't got no choice man. It's kinda like... Education.

SCROOGE: An educational trip? To study geography in some God forsaken place in the country, like (LOCAL PLACE NAME), with no running water or sanitation.

MARLEY'S GHOST: No man. Kinda like education for da soul. You're a bad cat brother Scrooge. Everybody like, ol' Scroogie, he lost his way. You playing the evil money and greed brother. Your soul gonna go bad if we don't grab it. Jacob Marley, he already in the next life and...

SCROOGE: You know old Jacob? How is he?

MARLEY'S GHOST: What you mean, how is he? He dead brother. He carries dat burden of chains that he dropped on himself in life. Brother Jacob gotta carry around them mighty big chains.

SCROOGE: Thankfully, I have no chains.

MARLEY'S GHOST: Brother, right now you is creating chains so big you ain't gonna move a muscle when you dead. I'm like here to help you change into a smoothie Scroogie. Lighten those chains boy.

All-right man! They gonna send you three more spirits.

SCROOGE: Three! Three more? Don't tell me. The ghost of Jimmy Hendrix. The ghost of Michael Jackson. And the ghost of that bloke who plays the spoons down at the (LOCAL PUB NAME).

MARLEY'S GHOST: He's not dead.

SCROOGE: Most of the customers wish he was.

MARLEY'S GHOST: Listen up man! The first bad brother will arrive when the bell dings one. The second, he come tomorrow, same time. Number three bad cat comes the next night. Kinda like as your tricky ticky clock strike twelve.

SCROOGE: What! Three nights with no sleep? Couldn't I just take them all at once. A special offer? Buy one get two free.

MARLEY'S GHOST: Needy naahde no man! You gotta get the full vibes. You listen to those cats or you gonna end up in the bad doo doo.

Everybody like, "Ooooooh ghosty, I scared". But it's like, you brother, you need this bad.

You wanna jam with me man?

SCROOGE: I have no idea what you're talking about.

MUSICAL NUMBER: Marley's Ghost and Scrooge.

SUGGESTION: Jamming. By Bob Marley.

BEFORE THE END OF THE SONG MARLEY'S GHOST DRIFTS OFF AND EXITS, LEAVING SCROOGE TO UNKNOWINGLY FINISH THE LAST VERSE OR CHORUS ON HIS OWN.

A TINKLING DOOR BELL RINGS.

SCROOGE: That's it! The bell. The Marley said the first spirit would arrive when the bell rang once.

THE DOOR BELL TINKLES AGAIN.

SCROOGE: I don't remember Marley mentioning it ringing twice.

THE DOOR BELL TINKLES FOR THE THIRD TIME.

SCROOGE: Thrice?

NEPHEW FRED: (FROM OFF.) Uncle it's me.

SCROOGE: Me who. Which ghost are you?

NEPHEW FRED: (FROM OFF.) Uncle it's me. Your nephew, Fred.

SCROOGE: How can you be a ghost? You're not dead.

NEPHEW FRED: Of course I'm not dead. Let me in Uncle please.

SCROOGE GOES OFF (OR TO A DOOR) AND RETURNS WITH FRED.

SCROOGE: Why are you pretending to be a ghost?

NEPHEW FRED: What is all this about ghosts. Uncle Scrooge, I'm here to ask you to join us tomorrow. For Christmas Dinner.

SCROOGE: Christmas dinner you say? An excuse to drink yourself silly and eat yourself fat. My work doesn't stop just because everyone wants to make merry. Already my clerk is making me poorer by demanding, yes demanding, a day off with full pay.

NEPHEW FRED: But it's Christmas uncle. I want nothing from you. I ask nothing of you. There is a place at our table for you. Join us and have a merry Christmas uncle.

SCROOGE: Bah! You and your "Merry Christmas". Humbug!

NEPHEW FRED: It's not humbug Uncle. Come for dinner. We'll be very pleased to see you.

SCROOGE: You can see me now. Look! Here I am. What do I need with your "Merry Christmas"?

NEPHEW FRED: Why are you so against Christmas? Dine with us tomorrow and feel the joy of the season.

SCROOGE: Joy! Joy you say. Christmas is a humbug. We live in a world of fools, prancing around shouting "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas". Christmas is a time for people buying things with money they don't have.

SCROOGE: If I had my way, every idiot who goes around with "Merry Christmas" on his lips would be boiled in his own pudding.

NEPHEW FRED: Uncle. You don't mean that.

SCROOGE: Don't I? Nephew, keep your Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine.

NEPHEW FRED: But that's just it. You *don't* keep Christmas.

SCROOGE: Christmas has never done anyone any good, save putting them all in debt and owing me money.

NEPHEW FRED: Christmas is a time of cheer. A time when people and families come together to join in one big celebration. A kind, forgiving, charitable time where men and women put their differences aside and open their hearts to others.

SCROOGE: Bah!

NEPHEW FRED: Christmas has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket but I believe it has done me good in so many ways.

SCROOGE: Humbug! Humbug I say.

NEPHEW FRED: Join us uncle. Join us around our family table tomorrow. We ask for nothing but your company.

SCROOGE: Let yourself out. I'm going back to bed.

MR SCROOGE RETURNS TO HIS BED.

DURING THE NEXT SONG, FRED WALKS FORWARD AS THE TABS CLOSE BEHIND HIM. HE ENDS UP SINGING ON THE APRON AND IS JOINED BY THE ENSEMBLE.

MUSICAL NUMBER: Fred (joined by the Ensemble).

SUGGESTION: Step into Christmas - Elton John.

END SCENE.

SCENE 2. THE STREETS OF LONDON.

THIS SCENE CAN BE PLAYED ON THE APRON IN FRONT OF THE TABS, OR USING A FRONT CLOTH.

FRED AND THE ENSEMBLE ARE CONTINUING TO SING THE LAST MUSICAL NUMBER.

MR FLAGGON ENTERS OR COMES OUT OF THE ENSEMBLE.

MR FLAGGON: (POINTING INTO AUDIENCE.) Shake your tins down there my friends. They look rich and nicely softened up to give a few pennies to the cause.

NEPHEW FRED: What good cause are you collecting for?

MR FLAGGON: The collection is for that large misunderstood group of our fellow men and women who need some small encouragement in life.

NEPHEW FRED: That sounds very noble. Does your charity have a name.

MR FLAGGON: The B.U.R.P.S.

NEPHEW FRED: B,U,R,P,S. The Burps?

MR FLAGGON: Yes. The Basically Unpopular and Rotten People in Society.

NEPHEW FRED: They sound like a very sad and maligned group. Tell me about them.

MR FLAGGON: They include all those sad and unloved souls who need our appreciation and understanding at this time of the year. Traffic wardens, estate agents, car salesmen and politicians.

THE ENSEMBLE GO INTO THE AUDIENCE SHAKING COLLECTION TINS, LEAVING NEPHEW FRED AND MR FLAGGON ON STAGE.

MR FLAGGON: Please give generously for the sake of the Basically Unpopular and Rotten People in Society. Any small donation will help these people get a proper job and become a useful member of mankind.

NEPHEW FRED: They don't seem happy to support your cause.

MR FLAGGON: Oh yes they will.

NEPHEW FRED: (ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE.) Oh no they won't.

MR FLAGGON: Oh yes they will.

NEPHEW FRED: (ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE.) Oh no they won't.

THE ENSEMBLE EXIT VIA THE AUDITORIUM.

A CUCKOO CLOCK SOUNDS. SCROOGE BURSTS THROUGH THE TABS LOOKING FRIGHTENED.

SCROOGE: Did you hear it?

NEPHEW FRED: Uncle Scrooge. Whatever's up?

SCROOGE: The clock. Marley said a ghost would appear when the town clock struck one.

NEPHEW FRED: But it was a cuckoo clock.

SCROOGE: Have you not heard of the great cuckoo clock of St James the virgin?

NEPHEW FRED: A ghost?

SCROOGE: Yes. Marley said a ghost would appear at one.

A GHOST ENTERS FROM THE SIDE.

MR FLAGGON: (POINTING.) What, you mean like that ghost over there.

MR FLAGGON AND FRED JUMP AT SEEING THE GHOST AND FLEE OFF STAGE INTO THE AUDITORIUM AND EXIT.

GHOST OF PAST: Whooooooooooooooooo!

SCROOGE: What?

GHOST OF PAST: I said... Whooooooooooooooooo!

SCROOGE: What on earth...

GHOST OF PAST: Whooooooooooooooooo! I'm a ghost. I'm frightening you.

SCROOGE: Oh no you're not.

GHOST OF PAST: Oh yes I am. (POINTING AT AUDIENCE.) At least I'm frightening them.

SCROOGE: (ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE.) Oh no you're not.

GHOST OF PAST: Oh yes I am.

SCROOGE: Can we just get on with this? Are you the ghost Marley told me to expect?

GHOST OF PAST: Of course I am you idiot. You don't think I just turned up on a whim do you? I could be in my normal haunt, scaring the bloomers off (NAME A LOCAL PROMINENT PERSON.) But here I am wasting my time on a lost course like you.

SCROOGE: A lost course you say?

GHOST OF PAST: Well, putting the willies up you is not going to make you see the error of your ways is it? You're too far gone buddy.

SCROOGE: I haven't gone anywhere. I am just a humble businessman doing my bit to help society.

GHOST OF PAST: Yeah! And I'm Mary Berry.

SCROOGE: So let's assume for a moment that you are the ghost I'm expecting. What is your business with me?

GHOST OF PAST: I am the ghost of Christmas past. It's my job to show you what you were like in the good old days. To remind you where you came from.

SCROOGE: Oh, a bit like that programme. "Who Do You Think You Are?" Am I related to Royalty like that Danny Dyer.

GHOST OF PAST: Oi you. Listen up matey. I am the ghost of Christmas Past. I'm here to take you on a journey...

SCROOGE: If it's first class, you're paying.

GHOST OF PAST: ...to take you on a journey into your past. To show you of who you once were. Goodness knows why as you're an old skinflint and a quick haunting isn't gonna change much now is it? But... Don't say we didn't try. Whooooooooooooooooo!

SCROOGE: What?

GHOST OF PAST: Whooooooooooooooooo!

SCROOGE: I'd give that a rest if you want us to take you seriously.

THE TABS START TO OPEN AS SCROOGE AND
THE GHOST WALK INTO THE NEXT SCENE.

END SCENE.

SCENE 3: SCROOGE'S PAST.

THE SCENE IS OLD LOOKING WITH HINTS OF A SCHOOLROOM OR COULD BE SOMETHING LIKE WOODEN PANELING THAT MAYBE GO RIGHT THROUGH THE SCENE.

AS THE TABS OPEN, WE SEE SCHOOLCHILDREN (PERHAPS A KIDS ENSEMBLE?) AND A TEACHER. YOUNG SCROOGE IS STANDING IN THE MIDDLE.

SCROOGE: Where are we? I normally get a nose bleed if I go further than (NAME LOCAL TOWN.)

Just a moment. This is my old school. That's me there. Look. How can this be?

GHOST OF PAST: We are viewing your past. They cannot see or hear us. We are just shadows to them.

SCHOOLMASTER: Master Scrooge...

SCROOGE: Yes Sir.

GHOST OF PAST: The boy, not you.

SCHOOLMASTER: Master Scrooge, sing us a Christmas carol.

THE YOUNG VERSION OF SCROOGE STANDS ON A CHAIR AND SINGS.

MUSICAL NUMBER: Young Scrooge, later joined by Scrooge himself.

SUGGESTION: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen.

OLDER SCROOGE JOINS IN AFTER THE FIRST VERSE AND THE TWO VERSIONS OF SCROOGE SING TOGETHER ALTHOUGH THEY DON'T SEE EACH OTHER.

SCROOGE: I don't think I've sung that since that very day.

GHOST OF PAST: Listening to your voice now, I'm quite glad that you haven't.

THE YOUNG SCHOOL CHILDREN AND SCHOOLMASTER DRIFT AWAY AND EXIT IN ALL DIRECTIONS. YOUNG SCROOGE SITS WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

SCROOGE: Where are they going?

GHOST OF PAST: It's Christmas. They're all off home for the holidays.

SCROOGE: All except me.

GHOST OF PAST: All except you.

SCROOGE: My Father thought it best that I stayed at...

LITTLE FAN RUSHES IN AND EMBRACES YOUNG SCROOGE.

SCROOGE: ... That's my sister Fan. I remember this. What a happy day.

LITTLE FAN: Brother, my dear brother. I've come to take you home.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Home Really home? But Father said...

LITTLE FAN: It was Father who sent me. You are to come home with me for Christmas. Father has become a new person and you are to be brought home forever.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Forever? (EXCITED.) No more school?

LITTLE FAN: (EXCITED.) No more school.

YOUNG SCROOGE: No more school dinners?

LITTLE FAN: No more school dinners.

YOUNG SCROOGE: No more sticking frogs in little Williams bed and laughing as he screams his head off and runs around the dormitory?

GHOST OF PAST: Did you really do that?

SCROOGE: I'd rather not say.

LITTLE FAN: You are to come home with me right now. Come on. Pack your bags.

LITTLE FAN GRABS YOUNG SCROOGE'S HAND
AND DRAGS HIM OFF. THEY BOTH EXIT
LAUGHING.

SCROOGE: I remember that very day. What fun we had that Christmas.

GHOST OF PAST: See there mate. You CAN enjoy Christmas?

SCROOGE: Bah! I didn't enjoy it for long. Christmas became a time of sorrow. Little Fan grew up and married. But then... She died. She died. I no longer have a sister.

GHOST OF PAST: But she had a child. Your nephew Fred.

SCROOGE: (SADLY.) That's all I have left of her. Her son. My nephew Fred. A constant reminder of what I've lost.

GHOST OF PAST: Come on. Let me show you something else.

TEENAGE SCROOGE ENTERS.

SCROOGE: That's me again.

GHOST OF PAST: Older now. A young man.

SCROOGE: Look how handsome I was.

GHOST OF PAST: On a scale of one to ten I'd probably give you a six.

SCROOGE: Just a moment. Just a moment I say. Only a six. Look at me there. In my prime. The sap is rising and I'm just starting out in business. If you saw me on Tinder you'd certainly swipe right.

SCROOGE'S GIRLFRIEND BELLE RUNS IN AND
HUGS TEENAGE SCROOGE.

SCROOGE: See. Look at that. I told you. That's Belle. My first true love. We were engaged to be married you know.

GHOST OF PAST: Then you're gonna have to tell me why you didn't go through with it?

SCROOGE: Ah! Well... She loved me, and I loved her. But she said... Well she mentioned... Or at least there was a hint... It's not like you think.

GHOST OF PAST: Shall we see what *really* happened?

BELLE: My darling Ebenezer.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: My darling Belle.

BELLE: Ebenezer.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Belle

BELLE: My big Ebbie.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: My big belly.

BELLE: I have some sad news.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Has the goldfish died?

BELLE: Worse?

TEENAGE SCROOGE: We've run out of paper in the outside loo?

BELLE: Far worse?

TEENAGE SCROOGE: The rabbits have escaped and those weren't raisins in the breakfast muesli?

BELLE: Far far worse.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: The moths have got into my best winter long Johns?

BELLE: No my darling. All those are fine.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Thank goodness. I've only had those long Johns seven years and if they...

BELLE: Listen my Ebbie!

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Yes, my belly!

BELLE: It's us.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Us my darling?

BELLE: Yes, another love has replaced mine in your affection.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: Not Dolly who sells holly from the trolley? That was just a rumour put about by...

BELLE: I am being replaced by the golden idol.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: You've seen my golden idol? But that's just my Lindt Chocolate Bunny.

BELLE: I mean your love of money. Of wealth. Of greed.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: There is nothing, nothing I say, so hard as poverty. It is my aim to lift our lives above it and improve my worldly fortune.

BELLE: But darling, there is only so much Prosecco I can drink.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: I have never sought release from our engagement.

BELLE: Sadly we have drifted apart. You no longer send me words of love on Facebook Messenger.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: I've forgotten my password.

BELLE: So we must part. Me to follow my dream of winning X-Factor, and you to chase the God of the golden goblets and the silver swizzle sticks.

TEENAGE SCROOGE: What?

BELLE: It sounded better in my head.

SCROOGE: Spirit, can we not stop this?

GHOST OF PAST: What is done is done. It's not possible to change the past. Only the future.

SCROOGE: So what will happen in the future?

GHOST OF PAST: You want me to forecast the future?

SCROOGE: If it's possible.

GHOST OF PAST: Well in the immediate future they're gonna sing a song, while we shoot off for a quick cuppa round the back.

SCROOGE AND THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST
EXIT.

MUSICAL NUMBER: Duet between Belle and Young Scrooge.

SUGGESTION: Re-Write the Stars. From the Greatest Showman.

YOUNG SCROOGE: How will I live without you?

BELLE: Just eat sensibly and get more exerciser.

YOUNG SCROOGE: But what will you do?

BELLE: I intend to marry a Premiership footballer and be an old hag.

YOUNG SCROOGE: I think you mean a "Wag".

BELLE: I'll have two beautiful children, one of each flavour, and live in the home counties wearing green wellies.

YOUNG SCROOGE: I will miss you.

BELLE: (SHE EXITS WAVING.) Missing you already.

YOUNG SCROOGE WATCHES HER GO AND THEN
EXITS IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, AS
SCROOGE AND THE GHOST RE-ENTER

SCROOGE: I'm not sure who got the best of that deal.

GHOST OF PAST: Okay then mate, let me take you back a little further. Do you remember this?

SCROOGE AND THE GHOST LOOK ON AS FEZZIWIG AND DICK ENTER.

SCROOGE: (EXCITED.) Look, look! That's old Fezziwig. It's old Fezziwig, alive again. And dear Dick. We were both apprenticed to Fezziwig at the same time. Will we see me? Am I there? Where is the vision of me.

APPRENTICE SCROOGE ENTERS.

SCROOGE: Look! There I am. There I am. Look! That's me.

OLD FEZZIWIG: Yo ho there lads. Finish up. Finish your work and put everything away. It's Christmas Eve and time for a party.

SCROOGE: (LOOKING ON.) A party. They're going to have a party. We worked so hard for him, but he always treated us well. I remember this. What fun we had at that party.

OLD FEZZIWIG: Hilli-ho boys! Clear everything to the side my lads. Make room for all our guests.

THE PARTY GUESTS ENTER AND FILL THE STAGE. A FIDDLER. MRS FEZZIWIG AND HER THREE DAUGHTERS AND THEIR BOYFRIENDS. THE HOUSEMAID, THE COOK, THE BAKER, THE MILKMAN AND MANY OTHERS.

THE MUSIC STARTS UP, LED BY THE FIDDLER, AND EVERYONE DANCES. COUNTRY DANCING WHERE COUPLES GO UP AND DOWN THE LINES SWINGING EACH OTHER.

THE GHOST AND (ORIGINAL) SCROOGE LOOK ON WITH PLEASURE. SCROOGE EVEN STARTS TO DANCE UP AND DOWN ON THE SPOT.

SCROOGE: Oh how I remember this. Old Fezziwig was a strict boss, but always just. And he looked after us lads like we were his sons. He was a good example to us all.

GHOST OF PAST: And what, when you started out on your own. Did you follow his principles?

SCROOGE: Of course.

GHOST OF PAST: Then you will be having a Christmas party for your own staff this year.

SCROOGE: Ah! There's only Bob SCratchit you see, and he... and he has a family. I wouldn't want to drag him away from... Is this meant to be a lesson? Is this a lesson I say?

GHOST OF PAST: You my friend, must make of it what you will.

SCROOGE: Christmas is still a humbug. A humbug. But I must say, I wish I could see what SCratchit's family would have made of old Fezziwig's party.

EMILY CRATCHIT (DAME) ENTERS AND IMMEDIATELY JOINS IN WITH THE DANCING.

SHE IS VERY PROMINENT AND JIGS UP AND DOWN THE LINES KNOCKING OTHERS TO THE SIDE IN HER ENTHUSIASM.

EMILY CRATCHIT: La la la, don't you just love a party.

EMILY CRATCHIT GRABS FEZZIWIG AND PULLS HIM INTO THE DANCE WITH HER.

OLD FEZZIWIG: Do you work for me madam. I don't recognise you.

EMILY CRATCHIT: What a great party. You dance so well Sir. Come on. Round again.

THEY CONTINUE DANCING. EMILY DRAGGING FEZZIWIG AROUND.

SCROOGE: What's happening. This is my dream, but I'm sure that Mrs Scratchit...

GHOST OF PAST: Cratchit.

SCROOGE: ...Exactly. She was never around in my youth. She's accelerating the time laws.

GHOST OF PAST: Her vibes are so strong that she's crept through from your other thoughts. I've never had this problem before.

SCROOGE: She's broken through the time and motion barrier. Can't we stop her? She's ruining my memory.

EMILY CRATCHIT IS STILL DANCING UP AND DOWN, WITH ANY PARTNER SHE CAN FIND. THE OTHER PARTY GOERS ARE CLAPPING IN TIME AS SHE DANCES.

GHOST OF PAST: It must have been when you were thinking those good thoughts. Like, giving your own staff a party.

SCROOGE: I was never thinking of giving my own staff a party.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Come on everyone. Do the locomotion.

OLD FEZZIWIG: Do the what?

EMILY CRATCHIT: La la la (STILL DANCING.) Come on Fezzy. Shake yer bootie.

OLD FEZZIWIG: I don't think I have a bootie?

MUSICAL NUMBER: Lead by Emily Cratchit. The people of the party sing and dance.

SUGGESTION: Baby Shark or Gangnam Style. (Or something bouncy or silly.)

SCROOGE: What's she doing. This is my memory. She's messing with my past.

GHOST OF PAST: Hold on a moment. I'll see if I can bring her over to us.

THE GHOST MAKES "MAGICAL PASSES" AND EMILY CRATCHIT SUDDENLY CHANGES DIRECTION AND GRABS NORMAL SCROOGE AND DRAGS HIM INTO DANCING WITH HER.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (PULLING SCROOGE AROUND IN A DANCE) Hello Mr Scrooge. What are you doing here? I didn't see you arrive.

SCROOGE: (STILL BEING FORCED TO DANCE.) Whoa, whoa I say. You are not where you think you are. I'm not really here.

EMILY CRATCHIT: You're a smashing dancer Mr Scrooge. We should do this more often.

THE GHOST MAKES ANOTHER MAGICAL PASS.
THE PARTY GOES INTO DARKNESS AND EMILY
CRATCHIT STANDS EXHAUSTED WITH THE GHOST
AND SCROOGE. THE PARTY GOERS EXIT.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Phew! That was some party. I can't resist a sing song and a good jig about.

SCROOGE: Madam, a bit of decorum please.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Oh. Mr Scrooge. You were just... We were just... You were... Great mover Mr Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Humbug.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Sorry. A step too far perhaps. (SEEING GHOST.) Hello! Who's your friend? Looks a bit pale.

SCROOGE: Madam you are in my dream. Please vacate this memory and return to your own time.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Just a moment. Have I popped up in one of your dreams? Was it a saucy one? You were having a dream and thought of the most gorgeous woman you could think of and there I was.

SCROOGE: It was nothing of the kind.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Are you sure lovie? I mean, I know you naughty boys.

SCROOGE: It was certainly nothing like that.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE.) Oh yes it was.

SCROOGE: Oh no it wasn't.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Oh yes it was.

SCROOGE: Wasn't.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Was.

SCROOGE: Wasn't, wasn't, wasn't.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Was, was, was. Oh Mr Scrooge. I can never look at you the same way again.

SCROOGE: Spirit! Can't you do something?

GHOST OF PAST: Hold on.

THE GHOST MAKES "MAGICAL PASSES" AND
EMILY CRATCHIT GOES INTO A TRANCE. SHE
TWEAKS SCROOGE ON THE CHEEK, BEFORE
WALKING FORWARD.

SCROOGE: Embarrassing.

GHOST OF PAST: She won't remember a thing. Leave her be mate and come back to the party.

EMILY CRATCHIT WALKS FORWARD IN A DAZE,
ONTO THE APRON AS SCROOGE AND THE GHOST
ARE COVERED WITH THE CLOSING TABS.

END SCENE.

SCENE 4: SOMEWHERE IN TIME AND SPACE.

PLAYED ON THE APRON IN FRONT OF THE TABS.

EMILY CRATCHIT COMES FORWARD THROUGH THE CLOSING TABS OF THE PREVIOUS SCENE.

SHE LOOKS SLIGHTLY DAZED.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Where am I? I was at a party, then suddenly... Whoosh!... I wasn't.

You don't think someone interfered with me - my drink - do you? I feel like I've circled the twin tub and got stuck on the spin cycle. I hope it wasn't that Manni-yanna stuff.

I've got to get home to my hubby Bob. He'll be wanting his tea. Tonight it's soup. I studied soup at university. I got a Bachelors degree.

Actually we're so poor that for breakfast we can only afford normal K.

So let's see who's here? If you're here shout "Grandma's got a wizzle on her wazzle". (AUDIENCE RESPONSE.) If you're here but wish you were somewhere else, shout "My prangle's got stuck in the mangle". (AUDIENCE RESPONSE.) If you're not here at all, shout "Jingle, Jangle, Jollop.". (POSSIBLE AUDIENCE RESPONSE.) There's always one.

Actually it's a good thing that some people are not here as I'm gonna sing a song. Oh yes I am. (AUDIENCE RESPONSE.) Oh yes I am. (AUDIENCE RESPONSE.) Don't think you can get round me like that.

Actually I once wrote a song about an infection of measles. It was very catchy.

MUSICAL NUMBER: Dame Emily Cratchit.

SUGGESTION: Rocking Around The Christmas Tree - Brenda Lee.

AT THE END OF THE SONG THE STAGE DIMS AND THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT ENTERS.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Whoa! You don't look too well lovie.

GHOST OF PRESENT: I know. I'm a g-host.

EMILY CRATCHIT: A g-host? Oh! A ghost. (JUMPING.) A GHOST! But I can see you. Have I crossed over?

GHOST OF PRESENT: Nah. You've just got a little lost on your way home.

EMILY CRATCHIT: But a ghost? I can see you.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Yeaah that does seem a bit odd. I guess that there are those who has brains and those who have other things.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Sorry, I'm still not sure who you are and why I can see you.

GHOST OF PRESENT: You can't really see me.

EMILY CRATCHIT: I can.

GHOST OF PRESENT: You really can't.

EMILY CRATCHIT: I most definitely can. Although... Is this a dream?

GHOST OF PRESENT: I am the g-host of Cer-rist-mas P-present.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Cer-rist-mas P-present? Christmas present. Oooo! I hope you've got a present for me.

GHOST OF PRESENT: I doubt it. Who exactly are you?

EMILY CRATCHIT: At the moment I'm not sure who exactly I am. You see I was poorly treated at a recent party and I fear that I might have had my identity stolen.

GHOST OF PRESENT: You haven't been on that inter-nit thing have you? Putting your details in?

EMILY CRATCHIT: I'll have you know I'm a good girl and I don't go putting my "details" IN, as you call it. I don't put anything IN anywhere.

GHOST OF PRESENT: You don't wanna go telling stuff to that inter-nit lot.

EMILY CRATCHIT: No no. It wasn't the nit lot. I was at a party doing... dancing... yes, dancing... and... and... Are you Santa?

GHOST OF PRESENT: Not me lady. I'm a g-host, not yer S-anta.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Only... Perhaps I should be going.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Good thinking.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Yes yes. Home.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Home.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Home. Yes. Where exactly is home?

GHOST OF PRESENT: (POINTING OFF STAGE.) Home.

EMILY CRATCHIT EXITS LOOKING DAZED.

A SOMEWHAT ODD SOUNDING CLOCK STRIKES.
(EITHER A SPEEDED UP CHIME OR A MIXTURE
OF MANY.)

SCROOGE BURSTS THROUGH THE TABS IN A
PANIC.

SCROOGE: I heard the bells.

GHOST OF PRESENT: I am the g-host of Cer-rist-mas P-present.

SCROOGE: The g-host of Cer-rist-mas P-present? Like Santa?

GHOST OF PRESENT: (SIGH.) No, not like Santa.

SCROOGE: I thought I'd missed you. You're late.

GHOST OF PRESENT: I was delayed by a passing... er... a strange business with a slightly odd woman.

SCROOGE: What's the time?

GHOST OF PRESENT: It's now. Right now. Cer-rist-mas day. Now.

SCROOGE: But how can that be?

GHOST OF PRESENT: Look mate! If yer don't wanna do this, it's fine by me. I can go spook someone else.

SCROOGE: No no no. No I say. I have to take what's coming as Marley told me I would. I'm learning a lot. Yes a lot. Lead on ghost. Show me what I need to know.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Here we go then. Your nephew.

SCROOGE: My nephew Fred? My sister's son?

GHOST OF PRESENT: The very same. At home for Cer-rist-mas.

THE GHOST POINTS TO THE TABS AS THEY
OPEN FOR THE NEXT SCENE.

END SCENE.

SCENE 5: THE PARLOUR OF SCROOGES NEPHEW FRED.

A PARTY IN IN PROGRESS. THEY ARE PLAYING BLIND MAN'S BUFF. THE PERSON WITH THE BLINDFOLD COMES TOWARDS SCROOGE AS IF TO CATCH HIM. SCROOGE JUMPS OUT OF THE WAY.

SCROOGE: They can see us.

GHOST OF PRESENT: No. We are only observers.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF COME TO AN END AND EVERYONE IN THE PARTY SEEMS JOLLY. A TRAY OF DRINKS ARE PASSED ROUND AND SCROOGE TRIES TO TAKE ONE. HE MISSES AND IS IGNORED AND UNSEEN.

NEPHEW FRED: What about a song?

SCROOGE: Oh what fun. A song.

NEPHEW FRED: A Christmas carol.

PARTY GUEST: (VARIOUS GUESTS CALL OUT DIFFERENT CAROLS.) Hark the Herald Angels.

SCROOGE: I like that one.

PARTY GUEST: Once in Royal David's City. - Silent Night. - Oh Come All Ye Faithful.

SCROOGE: (CALLING OUT.) Deck The Halls.

PARTY GUEST: What about Deck The Halls?

SCROOGE: Yes, come on, come on, Deck The Halls. We all know that one.

NEPHEW FRED: Do we all know that one?

SCROOGE: Oh course we all know that one. I like the bit where we do the "Fa la la la la's".

NEPHEW FRED: Who will start us off?

SCROOGE: (EXCITED.) I will, I will.

SCROOGE STARTS CONDUCTING.

MUSICAL NUMBER: Sung by the party goers.

SUGGESTION: Deck the Halls. - Traditional.

SCROOGE JOINS IN ENTHUSIASTICALLY EVEN THOUGH HE CAN'T BE SEEN OR HEARD.

NEPHEW FRED: I'd like to propose a toast.

SCROOGE: Oh I love a toast.

PARTY GUEST: Yes a toast.

NEPHEW FRED: To my uncle Ebenezer. Who was invited here today, but for reasons only known to himself, couldn't come.

SCROOGE: Did he ask me? Did he? Did he?

PARTY GUEST: Fred, I'm not sure I want to toast your uncle Scrooge.

NEPHEW FRED: He's a comical old fellow, that's the truth. He called Christmas a humbug.

SCROOGE: It is a humbug.

NEPHEW FRED: My uncle is not as pleasant as perhaps he should be but his offenses carry their own punishment.

SCROOGE: What punishment? What punishment I say?

NEPHEW FRED: He is very rich, yet his wealth is no use to him as he doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't even make himself comfortable by spending some and he certainly doesn't have the pleasure of thinking that others will benefit from it.

PARTY GUEST: I have no patience with him.

SCROOGE: Why not? Why not indeed?

NEPHEW FRED: Who suffers from his ill whims? Himself! He takes it in his head to dislike us and not come to dine with us. But all that has happened is that he has missed out on a very good dinner and cheerful company.

SCROOGE: I like my own company.

NEPHEW FRED: He could be here enjoying our fire, making merry with singing. Generally having a pleasant time.

SCROOGE: Humbug!

NEPHEW FRED: I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not. So the toast is... A Merry Christmas to Uncle Scrooge whether he likes it or not.

PARTY GUEST: (EVERYONE TOASTS TOGETHER.) Whether he likes it or not.

NEPHEW FRED: And a Happy New Year to the old man, wherever he is.

SCROOGE: Bah...! Humbug! Humbug I say. How dare he toast me and wish me kindness. He'll want something, I have no doubt.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Mate, he want's nothing. Only that you give a little of yourself. Let me show you something else.

SCROOGE AND THE GHOST WALK FORWARD
DURING THE NEXT FEW LINES AND THE TABS
CLOSE BEHIND THEM.

SCROOGE: Can't we go home now? This late night traveling is not good for my constitution.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Listen up son. When you've learned all I have to teach I will release you.

SCROOGE: Oh goodie goodie. Then I can go back home and spend Christmas in my own way.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Oi! Once I've finished, there will be one more spirit who will visit you.

SCROOGE: I may be too tired and refuse to go.

GHOST OF PRESENT: You do not have a choice my friend. Marley promised you three spirits and three you're gonna get. Once we have all visited then you can return to your old way if you wish.

SCROOGE: My old ways were doing no harm.

TABS ARE NOW FULL CLOSED AND THEY ARE
STANDING ON THE APRON.

END SCENE.

SCENE 6: SOMEWHERE IN LONDON JUST WEST OF THE NORTH.

SCROOGE AND THE GHOST OF THE PRESENT ARE ON THE APRON IN FRONT OF THE TABS OR FRONT CLOTH.

SCROOGE: (TO AUDIENCE.) Who are you looking at. Some of you look like you've seen a ghost. Oh yes you do.
(AUDIENCE REACTION.) Bah.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Humbug.

SCROOGE: Don't you start.

EMILY CRATCHIT ENTERS. SHE CAN SEE THE GHOST, BUT CAN'T SEE SCROOGE.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (TO AUDIENCE.) Hello boys and girls. Have I missed anything?

SCROOGE: Is this part of my haunting?

EMILY CRATCHIT: (JUMPING AT SEEING GHOST.) Woa! (TO GHOST.) Are you alright lovie? I don't want to worry you, but when Uncle Archie looked like that, he died the next day.

GHOST OF PRESENT: (ASIDE TO SCROOGE.) We seem to have got a slight intrusion into our traveling.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Are we traveling? Where to? I was just on my way home from... Somewhere... At least I think I was... And there you were. You don't want to go popping up like that all over the place. It's frightening. I think a little bit of wee came out.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Mrs Cratchit...

EMILY CRATCHIT: Yes lovie.

GHOST OF PRESENT: We...

EMILY CRATCHIT: We?

GHOST OF PRESENT: I... Just I... I am traveling to a variety of homes on Christmas day to show Mr Scrooooo... to learn... to learn how people celebrate the day.

SCROOGE: Well covered up. Don't tell her I'm here.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Then come and see my household lovie. We have a great time inspite of that Mr Scrooge not giving my poor husband any sort of Christmas bonus.

SCROOGE: A Christmas bonus! A Christmas bonus I say! I'm not made of money you know.

GHOST OF PRESENT: I'm sure Mr Scrooge would give you something extra for Christmas...

SCROOGE: Extra! Extra! No I won't. Earn it I say.

GHOST OF PRESENT: (TO SCROOGE.) That's not the right spirit.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Gin!

GHOST OF PRESENT: Gin?

EMILY CRATCHIT: Gin. The right spirit. Gin.

SCROOGE: How can she afford gin?

GHOST OF PRESENT: How can you afford gin?

SCROOGE: She can't. She can't.

EMILY CRATCHIT: We can't. We can't. We barely have enough to buy a Christmas pudding. Not one of those Heston Bloomingface ones from that Waitrose. Not even one of those Mrs Twin Peaks from the knock off shop on the corner.

SCROOGE: I should think not.

EMILY CRATCHIT: We have to make our own. I mix it up then boil it wrapped in my husbands hanky. We wash the snot out first.

SCROOGE: Obviously.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Obviously.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Yet you still have a good Christmas even without help from your husband's evil employer?

SCROOGE: Evil!

EMILY CRATCHIT: My poor husband has to plead for the day off. (TO AUDIENCE.) He has to plead for the day off. (ENCOURAGING AN AHH!) He does more pleading than that. (ENCOURAGING AN AHH!)

SCROOGE: (TO AUDIENCE.) People take advantage of my kind nature. Oh yes they do. (AUDIENCE REACTION.) Oh yes they do. (AUDIENCE REACTION.)

EMILY CRATCHIT: (TO GHOST.) Have you noticed how this lot seem to be talking to themselves?

GHOST OF PRESENT: It is time for me to go.

EMILY CRATCHIT: More traveling?

GHOST OF PRESENT: More traveling.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (NAME OF LOCAL TAXI COMPANY..) are not running their hansom cabs on Christmas day you know.

GHOST OF PRESENT: I have other ways of getting about.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Well if you're traveling our way, feel free to pop in. A cup of tea and a sponge finger.

GHOST OF PRESENT: Thank you.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Due to my husband's employer being an old skinflint...

SCROOGE: Oi!

EMILY CRATCHIT: ... we only have one tea bag to go round. But I'm sure we can dip it in some hot water for you. Bring your own milk. And sugar. And actually it would be good to bring your own cup, as our "best" Megan and Harry mug got chipped last week when we were bailing out the blocked loo.

SCROOGE AND THE GHOST EXIT.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (TO AUDIENCE.) Well you know what it's like. No money coming in and six children to support. Yes six. Once we've worked out where they're all coming from I'm gonna tie a knot in it.

My Bob, Mr Cratchit, he's a love. He looks after us all without complaint. Every Friday, rain or shine, he takes us all down the chippie to look in the window. And we get regular exercise as a family. It's amazing how fit you can get jumping over dog poo in the park (OR NAME OF LOCAL BEAUTY SPOT).

Would you like to meet my family? (AUDIENCE REACTION.) I said, would you like to meet my family? (AUDIENCE REACTION.) Come on then. Welcome to our humble home.

THE TABS START TO OPEN AND EMILY
CRATCHIT WALKS THROUGH THEM INTO THE
NEXT SCENE.

END SCENE.

SCENE 7. THE HOME OF THE CRATCHIT FAMILY.

A HUMBLE HOME. SITTING AROUND THE TABLE
ARE THE CRATCHIT CHILDREN. (NOT TINY TIM
OR HUSBAND BOB.)

EMILY CRATCHIT: (TO AUDIENCE.) Come in, come in. Welcome to the
place we call home. It's not too bad other than we
get a shocking wifi signal.

I want you to meet my family. These are my six
children. Only five of them on show at the moment.
Tiny Tim is still at church with his father.

Do you know, I recently read a survey which said that
one in every sixth child born in the world is
Chinese. (STAGE WHISPER TO AUDIENCE.) Personally I
think it's our Belinda.

Come on children. Come and meet these nice people of
(LOCAL TOWN.).

THE CHILDREN FORM A LINE IN AGE ORDER.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Say hello to the nice people and tell them your name.

MARTHA: Hello. My name's Martha and I'm the oldest. I'm an
apprentice milliner, learning to make fancy hats for
posh people.

BELINDA: Merry Christmas. I'm Belinda Cratchit. The second
eldest child.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (STAGE WHISPER TO AUDIENCE.) Chinese.

PETER: My name's Peter. Pleased to meet you. I'll be going
out to work soon. Father has a situation in mind for
me where they pay a full five-and-sixpence a week.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (ASIDE TO AUDIENCE.) To anyone who doesn't remember
old money, that's twenty seven and a half pence a
week. (TO NEXT CHILD.) Come on lad. Your go.

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: I don't want a go.

EMILY CRATCHIT: What do you mean you don't want a go? You only have
to tell them your name.

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: I don't have a name.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Of course you have a name. How can you not have a
name?

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: It's that Mr Charles Dickens' fault. In his book he
said you had six children, but he didn't give me a
name.

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: Or me.

EMILY CRATCHIT: What! You two don't have names?

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: No Mother. We were never named in the book.

EMILY CRATCHIT: How did I manage to give birth to you, nurse you both
through ping pong, apple bobbing and basic toilet
training without asking your names?

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: I want to be called Elvis.

EMILY CRATCHIT: What! Elvis! What? We can't have someone in a play by Charles Dickens called Elvis.

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: It's not my fault he didn't give me a name.

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: If Mr Dickens was too lazy to name us, then we should be allowed to choose one ourselves.

CRATCHIT CHILD 4: Hello. I'm Elvis. (IMPERSONATING ELVIS.) Ah ha ha!

EMILY CRATCHIT: (TO NEXT CHILD.) And you haven't got a name either? I suppose you want to be something girly or flowery like Rose, or Iris, or Daisy.

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: I want to be called Bontanga-de'anger-la'bon-bon.

EMILY CRATCHIT: What?

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: Bontanga-de'anger-la'bon-bon.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Bontanga-de'anger-la'bon-bon? I'm not sure Mr Dickens would have...

CRATCHIT CHILD 5: He would if he'd thought of it first.

EMILY CRATCHIT: (TO AUDIENCE.) As I was saying. These are my lovely children (GOING ALONG LINE.) Martha, Belinda, Peter... Elvis and Bontanga-de'anger-la'bon-bon.

THE FAMILY GO ABOUT THE TASK OF SETTING THE TABLE FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER.

SCROOGE AND THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT ENTER. THEY ARE NOT SEEN BY THE CRATCHIT FAMILY.

SCROOGE: Why have you brought me here? This is my clerk Bob Scatchit's house.

GHOST OF PAST: Cratchit. Look mate, I want you to see how they will be spending Christmas.

SCROOGE: Bah! Where's SCratchit? I can't see him.

BOB CRATCHIT ENTERS WITH TINY TIM ON HIS BACK. TINY TIM IS CARRYING A SMALL WOODEN CRUTCH.

BOB CRATCHIT: A Merry Christmas to us all my dears.

CHILDREN TOGETHER: Merry Christmas Father.

TINY TIM: Merry Christmas.

EMILY CRATCHIT: How was church? Lots of people?

BOB CRATCHIT: It's nice to see so many in church on Christmas day.

SCROOGE: Rather than at home on their X-box's.

TINY TIM: It was good for people to see me in church today.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Why would that be son?

TINY TIM: Because they see me as a cripple. It reminds them on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.

BOB CRATCHIT: Well done lad.

EMILY CRATCHIT: And it reminds them how poor we are and how old Scrooge doesn't pay you enough for the hard work you put in.

BOB CRATCHIT: My dear. The children. Christmas Day.

EMILY CRATCHIT: We'd better eat, before I say something I'll regret. Children. Go and bring in the food.

THE CHILDREN GO OFF AND RETURN WITH A SMALL GOOSE AND THE REST OF THE SAD MEAL.

AS THE FOOD IS PARADED IN ON A LARGE TRAY IT PASSES SCROOGE. SCROOGE QUICKLY STEALS A POTATO AS IT GOES BY. (POSSIBLE ALREADY ON A FORK?)

EMILY CRATCHIT: It's not a very big goose lovies. But it's the best I could get. Lidl's don't go much on goose.

MARTHA: Why do we have to have goose? It's so expensive.

EMILY CRATCHIT: That Mr Charles Dickens said goose, so goose it is. I don't think Bernard Matthews was born back then.

BELINDA: Lovely roasties mother.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Cooked in real beef dripping from a real beef.

MARTHA: I thought there was a potato each Mother? There's one missing.

SCROOGE HAS BEEN EATING THE POTATO AND NOW QUICKLY HIDES IT IN HIS POCKET LOOKING SHEEPISH.

EMILY CRATCHIT: You'll all love the Christmas pudding.

BELINDA: Will it have silver threepenny bits in it?

BOB CRATCHIT: We can't afford that kind of expense darling.

EMILY CRATCHIT: We're lucky to have a Christmas dinner at all with that Mr Scrooge paying your father so badly.

SCROOGE: Ghost. Did you hear that? Mrs SCratchit is blaming me for their miserable Christmas. I pay Bob Scatchet what he's worth.

GHOST OF PAST: Oh no you don't.

SCROOGE: (TO AUDIENCE.) Oh yes I do. (AUDIENCE REACTION.) Stop enjoying yourself! This is the sad bit.

BOB CRATCHIT: (RAISING HIS GLASS.) A toast. I give you Mr Scrooge. The founder of the feast.

SCROOGE: There. You see. (TOASTING WITH AN INVISIBLE GLASS.) Mr Scrooge. The founder of the feast.

EMILY CRATCHIT: The founder of the feast indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast on.

SCROOGE: Come on, say it. I'm listening. I'm listening.

GHOST OF PAST: They can't see us.

EMILY CRATCHIT: I'll drink his health for your sake, not his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year. He'll be very merry and very happy I have no doubt.

CHILDREN TOGETHER: To Mr Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Thank you, thank you.

THE FAMILY LOOK DOWNCAST AT THE MENTION OF MR SCROOGE.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Well that's put a damper on our Christmas for sure.

SCROOGE: Why? Why I say? I've not done anything.

GHOST OF PAST: Exactly.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Let's have a song to cheer us all up.

SCROOGE: Oh good. A song. I love a song.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Who will start us off.

SCROOGE: I will, I will.

EMILY CRATCHIT: Children? Come on. Start us off.

THE CHILDREN START OFF THE SINGING, FOLLOWED BY MR AND MRS CRATCHIT. THE ENSEMBLE ENTER AND ALSO JOIN IN. (EVEN SCROOGE.)

MUSICAL NUMBER: Started by the Cratchit children. Followed by the whole ensemble joining in.

SUGGESTION: Merry Christmas Everybody - Slade.

TINY TIM: God bless us. Every one.

SCROOGE: Humbug!

END SCENE.

CLOSE TABS.

INTERVAL.

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