

Dickens' A Christmas Carol

*Adapted by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's a delightful and easy-to-do version of Dickens' Christmas story, faithfully adapted for young people and their families. Originally written as a touring show, it is adaptable to any theatre or stage facility. All the beloved characters and scenes are included: Scrooge and Cratchit in the counting house; the Ghost of Christmas Past; Scrooge's sweetheart Belle at the Fezziwig ball; the Ghost of Christmas Present and the Cratchit home with Tiny Tim; and even the sensitive scenes at the pawn shop and graveyard. Of course, there's the happy ending when Scrooge, now a changed man, promises the Cratchits a brighter future. The large, flexible cast allows for considerable doubling while the multiple playing areas can be defined by simple props and lighting or an optional periaktoi. Fun for all in under an hour!

Dickens' A Christmas Carol

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

30+ roles, much doubling possible

IN SCENE 1:

Ebenezer Scrooge
Bob Cratchit
Fred
Charity Maid #1
Charity Maid #2

IN SCENE 2:

Ghost of Jacob Marley

IN SCENE 3:

Ghost of Christmas Past
Young Ebenezer
Fan Scrooge
Fezziwig
Mrs. Fezziwig
Dick
Belle
Lucy
Kevin
Jenny

IN SCENE 4:

Ghost of Christmas Present
Penny Cratchit
Belinda Cratchit
Mrs. Cratchit
Martha Cratchit
"Tiny" Tim Cratchit
Fred's wife
Lady 1
Lady 2
Man 1
Man 2
Laundress
Mrs. Dibler
Undertaker
Old Joe
Boy

OPTIONAL EXTRAS as Christmas Carolers and Party Guests.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Scrooge and Marley's counting house.

Scene 2: Scrooge's home.

Scene 3: Scrooge's bedroom and other places that have been in his past.

Scene 4: Scrooge's bedroom and other places in his present and future.

Scene 5: Back at the Cratchit home.

SETTING

This play is easy to tour using a periaktoi and props. A periaktoi is an ancient device, often thought to be of Greek origin that is still used for stage scene changes. It is usually a triangular unit with three equal sides. Each side can have a different scene painted on it. When using more than one periaktoi in a row, it can look like a solid wall. When all the units are rotated to the second or third side, it reveals another scene.

Scenes in this play are Scrooge's counting house and the street in front of it; Scrooge's home with curtained bed; his childhood boarding school and the Fezziwig home; the Cratchit home with simple wooden dining table and benches; Fred's home; a London street; the pawn shop; and the graveyard.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Scrooge and Marley's counting house. Sitting with back to the audience is CRATCHIT busily working. SCROOGE is sitting at his desk facing front. It is dimly lit and the atmosphere is very cold. SFX: In the distance we can hear carolers singing. Cratchit stops work for a moment to rub his hands, then gets up to get his comforter which he wraps around his shoulders.)

SCROOGE: Cratchit! Cratchit! Have you lost your wits?

CRATCHIT: Oh! Why no, sir. I don't think so, sir.

SCROOGE: Well, I think so! What do you mean by leaving your desk?

CRATCHIT: Couldn't write because my hands were so cold so I thought...

SCROOGE: I don't pay you to think, Cratchit...

CRATCHIT: I only wanted to get my wrap...

SCROOGE: Get your wrap? Just an excuse for not working. You're no different from the rest I've had working here. Always wanting something for nothing. Always making excuses for wasting time!

CRATCHIT: Wasting time...! But—

SCROOGE: Silence! Back to your work at once!

(CRATCHIT goes back to working but after a moment stops to blow on his hands.)

SCROOGE: *(Cont'd.)* Cratchit, whatever are you doing?

CRATCHIT: Just trying to loosen my fingers, sir! They're cramped!

SCROOGE: Cold! Bah! Stop inventing excuses and get back to work.

(Scrooge's NEPHEW enters.)

NEPHEW: A Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!

NEPHEW: Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that, I am sure.

SCROOGE: I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

NEPHEW: Come then, what right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!

NEPHEW: Don't be cross, Uncle.

SCROOGE: What else can I be when I live in a world of fools such as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding, he should!

NEPHEW: Uncle!

SCROOGE: Nephew! You keep Christmas in your way, and let me keep it in mine.

NEPHEW: Keep it. But you don't keep it.

SCROOGE: Let me leave it alone then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!

NEPHEW: There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say. Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time, the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their hearts freely and think of each other as fellow men. Therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God Bless It!

(An involuntary applause from CRATCHIT. Realizing his mistake, he turns back to work.)

SCROOGE: Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your job.

End of Freeview

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