

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
by
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Shoebox Theatre, Inc.
2015 Old Orchard Drive
Dallas , Texas 75208
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Cast of Characters

<u>Lamplighter:</u>	Narrator of play. Romantic figure. Omnipotent.
<u>Ebenezer Scrooge:</u>	Miserly businessman. In his 60's. Lonely and fearful. Transforms from angry and bitter to ecstatically happy and grateful.
<u>Scrooge's nephew:</u>	Son of Scrooge's sister, Fan. HE is light-hearted and friendly. Devoted to his Uncle Ebenezer because of his mother.
<u>Clark & Fordham:</u>	Solicitors. Good hearted and philanthropic. Can be male or female.
<u>Jacob Marley:</u>	Scrooge's dead partner. A ghost. Frightening but treats Scrooge in a familiar manner.
<u>Ghost of Christmas Past:</u>	Female. Can be played by child or grown woman. Dressed in winter-white, nostalgic. Lace and pearls. Not frightening, rather, haunting and beautiful, like Scrooge's Christmas' past.
<u>Ghost of Christmas Present:</u>	Male or female. Abundance. Jolly and sarcastic. Warm and friendly. Firm but kind. Treats Scrooge like a child. Dressed in traditional Christmas colors of red, green and gold. Sparkles like a Christmas tree.
<u>Ghost of Christmas Future:</u>	Grim Reaper. Very frightening and silent. Uses body language to speak. Everyone's worst nightmare.
<u>Miss Coates:</u>	Schoolteacher of school age Scrooge. Young and kind.
<u>Mrs. Fezziwig:</u>	Abundant. Light-hearted and warm. About 60 years old. Outgoing and playful.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (cont'd)

<u>Mr. Fezziwig:</u>	Abundant. Light-hearted and warm. Boisterous. Generous. Teasing and fun. About 65 years old.
<u>Scrooge/School:</u>	Scrooge at age 10. Lonely and sad.
<u>Scrooge/Party:</u>	Scrooge at age 20. Controlled and shy. In love with Fezziwig's daughter, Nell. Awkward and stiff.
<u>Mrs. Cratchit:</u>	Efficient and responsible. Very maternal. Easily delighted by her husband and children. Worries a bit. Laughs easily.
<u>Mr. Cratchit:</u>	Easy-going and childlike. Playful. Musical and very physical. Soulful and sentimental. An optimist.
<u>Belinda Cratchit:</u>	10 years old. Efficient and responsible like her mother. Likes helping around the house.
<u>Peter Cratchit:</u>	12 years old. Playful and physical. Likes to tease Belinda.
<u>Martha Cratchit:</u>	16 years old. Sweet and loving. Maternal towards other children. Mrs. Cratchit's confidant.
<u>Tiny Tim Cratchit:</u>	5 years old. Frail. Innocent and sweet. Everybody's pet.
<u>Undertaker:</u>	Lively and sarcastic.
<u>Washerwoman:</u>	Sarcastic and bitter.
<u>Dickens' Chorale:</u>	Appears as singers for opening Number, transitions and in crowd scenes. Can be any age.
<u>Schoolchildren:</u>	Group (8-11 years old) to appear in

Schoolroom scene and opening number.
CAST OF CHARACTERS (cont'd)

Townspeople:

Individuals (12-16) to appear as extras in opening number, incidental characters in specific scenes.

Ignorance & Want:

Young ragged children in Christmas Present scene.

SETTING - London, England.

TIME - The late 1800's

DEDICATION

To Sally Cobaugh, who shares my love for this beautiful story by Charles Dickens.

NOTE FROM PLAYWRIGHT

This is my favorite Christmas story. It colorfully reminds us, old and young, just what the true Christmas spirit is....Love for our fellow man. May the truth of Christmas remain in our hearts year round.

TO THE DIRECTOR(S)

Remember that the groups (Dickens' Chorale, Schoolchildren, Townspeople) are to add color to the narrative. In an attempt to include some of Charles Dickens' vivid imagery as written in his descriptions of the passing scenes, I hope you will give yourself permission to be creative with these particular scenes. The intent is to illustrate the flavor of the times and allow the actors to create their own characters. i.e., the schoolchildren. "The Minister's Cat" was a parlor game in the 1800's and should be played in rehearsal. It will be much easier for children to remember the order and the words if they choose their own word to describe the cat. While playing the game within the scene, there can be mistakes. This should not be stressful in any way, but instead an exercise to be used in class/rehearsal. A fun way to begin and warm-up. Build in the mistakes, if necessary so that the game seems realistic. Be inventive and have fun!

ACT I

SCENE I

SETTING: A side street in London proper

AT RISE: Music begins. Crowds enter on cue to create a marketplace on Christmas Eve.

(Music cue)

SONG - A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE/COMPANY

NEPHEW

**THE HOLLYBERRY SINGS A SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH TO EVERYONE
I SING OF THE JOY THAT CHRISTMAS BRINGS
ALL ON A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE**

MRS. CRATCHIT

**LOOK AT THE CHILDREN LAUGH AND PLAY
TOGETHER THEY WILL SHARE THE JOYS OF CHRISTMAS DAY
MERRILY THEY PLAY AS GLAD HEARTS SING
ALL ON A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE**

ALL

**THE HOLLYBERRY SINGS A SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH TO EVERYONE
I SING OF THE JOY THAT CHRISTMAS BRINGS
ALL ON A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE**

DICKEN'S CHORALE DIRECTOR

**AS WE STROLL ALONG WE SING A SONG OF CHRISTMAS CHEER
HEAR THE BELLS UP IN THE TOWER TELL OF CHRISTMAS DAY
AND ON EVERY CORNER IS A FAVORITE CHANTICLEER
CAROLLING A MERRY CHRISTMAS SONG**

ALL

THE HOLLYBERRY SINGS A SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH TO EVERYONE
I SING OF THE JOY THAT CHRISTMAS BRINGS
ALL ON A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE

NEPHEW & MRS. CRATCHIT & DIRECTOR

A MERRY CHRISTMAS SONG
TO LAST THE WHOLE YEAR LONG
A CHANCE TO TELL THE WORLD
IN A JOYFUL WAY

ALL

THE HOLLYBERRY SINGS A SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH TO EVERYONE
I SING OF THE JOY THAT CHRISTMAS BRINGS
ALL ON A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE

ALL ON A MERRY CHRISTMAS EVE

(As TOWNSPEOPLE exit on cue, Music Cue for "Eyes
of Winter" sounds. DICKEN'S CHORALE takes their
place to sing. Can be Center Stage as if caroling for
passersby.)

SONG - EYES OF WINTER SONNET/DICKEN'S CHORALE

THE EYES OF WINTER PAST	MAKE THE YULETIDE LAST
HELP OUR GLAD HEARTS SING	SONGS OF WASSAILING
EYES OF WINTER NOW	TAKE A DIFFERENT VOW
CAROLING IN SNOW	WATCH FOR MISTLETOE
THE EYES OF WINTER SOON	SING A WISER TUNE
LOOK AT THINGS TO BE	MOST UNKNOWINGLY
EYES OF WINTER BRING	AGELESS SEASONING

(DICKEN'S CHORALE exits slowly as clock strikes six. LAMPLIGHTER
enters. Feigns a chill and looks up at the night as music fades)

LAMPLIGHTER

Marley was dead, to begin with. There was no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

**(TOWNSPEOPLE cross intermittently throughout monologue.
LAMPLIGHTER acknowledges A PASSERBY here)**

LAMPLIGHTER (Continued)

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

(LAMPLIGHTER lights lamp. Lights up on...)

ACT I

SCENE II

SETTING: Scrooge's counting house

AT RISE: SCROOGE and BOB CRATCHIT are working. It is cold and damp and dim. DICKEN'S CHORALE crosses humming "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen".

LAMPLIGHTER

Once upon a time....of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve....old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather....and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their chests, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone five, but it was quite dark already and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighboring offices. Scrooge was now and then keeping an eye upon his clerk, Bob Cratchit, who was dismally copying letters across the room.

(Enter SCROOGE'S NEPHEW)

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

What right have you to be dismal? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE

Bah!

NEPHEW

Don't be cross, Uncle!

SCROOGE

What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmastime 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 with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

NEPHEW

Uncle!

SCROOGE

Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

NEPHEW

Uncle, I am sure I have always thought of Christmastime as good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable pleasant time; the only time I know of when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely. and 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!

(Applause from BOB CRATCHIT who has been listening)

SCROOGE

(To CRATCHIT)

Let me hear another sound from YOU and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation.

(To NEPHEW)

You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

NEPHEW

Don't be angry, Uncle. Dine with us tomorrow!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

NEPHEW

What good reason can you have for NOT coming?

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

NEPHEW

I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrels between us. But I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon!!

An excerpt from ...

ACT II

SCENE I

SETTING:

Lamp post and Scrooge's chamber

AT RISE:

Enter LAMPLIGHTER on tag of
Intermission music)

LAMPLIGHTER

Now being prepared for almost anything, Scrooge was not by any means prepared for nothing; and consequently, when the bell struck two and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes. Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time he lay upon his bed. He muttered his favorite exclamation...

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

LAMPLIGHTER

He fluffed his pillow, cleaned his ears, checked his nightstand for his belongings and lay down again, dispelling the past hour of consequences as mere foolishness and as he lay, however, he began to hear laughter.

(Laughter is heard, softly at first, then louder and louder.
Music Cue)

LAMPLIGHTER (Continued)

The merriment seemed to draw closer and bring such distraction that Scrooge could not dispel the noise with even a humbug. Soon the laughter became so raucous that Scrooge was forced to take notice.

SONG - HUMBUG! BAH!/GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

HUMBUG! BAH! BAH HUMBUG! SAYS YOU
NO FINER PHRASE WAS EVER UTTERED BY A FINER FOOL
HUMBUG! BAH! BAH HUMBUG! SAYS I
BETTER TO REFRESH YOUR MIND AND CHOOSE ANOTHER LIE

2-1-32

SONG – HUMBUG! BAH!/CHRISTMAS PRESENT (Cont'd)

**FOR WHAT DOES IT MEAN, THIS HUMBUG?
A SORT OF SINGING FLY?
AND "BAH" IS THE SOUND A SHEEP MAKES
AS HE PASSES BY...**

(LAUGHTER)

**HUMBUG! BAH! BAH HUMBUG! AND WHY?
ONE LOOK AT A WORD LIKE HUMBUG COULD MAKE A SPIRIT CRY...**

**THE POWER OF A WORD FROM SUBLIME TO THE ABSURD
CAN REVEAL TO THE COMMON MAN
THE ESSENCE OF HIS VERY SOUL
AS HE STEPS TO MAKE A STAND**

SCROOGE

EH?

PRESENT

**HUMBUG! BAH! BAH HUMBUG! SAYS YOU
WHEN YOU SAY IT JUST REMEMBER WORDS REFLECT ON YOU
HUMBUG! BAH! BAH HUMBUG! SAYS I
FIND A DIFFERENT WORD TO USE AND YOU COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

PRESENT

(Spoken)

**I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the like
of me before.**

SCROOGE

**Never. Spirit, conduct me where you will. If you have aught to teach me, let me
profit by it.**

PRESENT

Touch my robe!