

SCROOGE !

*Adapted for the stage
by Tara Racenski*

*From the novel by
Charles Dickens*

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Adults: 5 males, 4 females
Children: 2 boys, 2 girls
Instrumentalist: 1 violinist

CAROLERS:

CAROLER #1, also BOB CRATCHIT, also WILKINS
CAROLER #2 also DO-GOODER, also MRS. CRATCHIT
CAROLER #3 also FRED, also EBENEZER at TWENTY,
CAROLER #4, also BELLE

THE FIDDLE PLAYER

SURPLUS POPULATION

No. 321, also MARLEY, FEZZIWIG, CHRISTMAS PRESENT, and JOE

No. 322, also UNDERTAKER, PETER CRATCHIT, FRIEND #1
And CHRISTMAS FUTURE.

No. 323, also CLERK, MARTHA CRATCHIT, and FRED'S WIFE

No. 324, also CLERGYMAN, CHRISTMAS PAST, FRIEND #2,
And MRS.DILBER

EBENEZER SCROOGE

CHILDREN

TIM CRATCHIT, (Tiny Tim) also SCHOOLBOY, also BEGGAR
ROGER CRATCHIT, also SCHOOLBOY, also WANT
BELINDA CRATCHIT, also SCHOOLBOY, also IGNORANCE
SALLY CRATCHIT, also FAN, also BEGGAR

Production notes: Scene changes should be swift and seamless. The absolute bare minimum of furnishings is to be desired. In a recent staging, a raised platform to one side of the shadow screen served as the entry way into "Scrooge's Office", and then with the addition of a bedsheet and two bedposts was transformed into his bed. In any case, The Surplus can be setting up, removing and "becoming" set pieces as narration continues. The audience should be invited to participate during the introduction and have access to the lyrics to the songs, either by screen or within their program, but it should be made very clear by some theatrical contract when they are to join in.

Costumes changes for the SURPLUS POPULATION will also need to be swift, and may even take place in view of the audience as needed. Thus, they should ideally have a base costume upon which they can add or remove accessories. The Ghost of Christmas Future should be performed entirely behind the shadow screen, allowing the light to cast a large and ominous shadow. CAROLERS also should only sing behind the shadow screen.

SCROOGE!

LIGHTS RISE on a stage bare apart from a shadow screen at center THE FIDDLE PLAYER plucking the opening strains of WHAT CHILD IS THIS. THE FIDDLE PLAYER continues as THE SURPLUS POPULATION (No. 321, No. 322, No. 323, No. 324) enter.

- No.321.** Old Marley was dead.
As dead as a nail.
If THIS is in doubt
Then NOTHING--
- No.322.** Fantastic!
- No.323.** Remarkable!
- No.322.** Wondrous!
- No.323.** Sublime!
- No.324.** --In short nothing Divine
Can come of our tale

NO. 324 snaps a finger and THE CAROLERS appear in silhouette behind the shadow Screen and THE SURPLUS bring on the scene: A lamppost. A shop-window

CAROLERS.

WHAT CHILD IS THIS WHO LAID TO REST
ON MARY'S LAP IS SLEEPING
WHOM ANGELS GREET WITH ANTHEM SWEET
WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCH IS KEEPING
THIS, THIS IS CHRIST THE KING
WHOM SHEPHERDS GUARD
AND ANGELS SING
HASTE, HASTE TO BRING HIM LAUD
THE BABE THE SON OF MARY.

- No.324.** And Scrooge knew he was dead?
- No.321.** Well, naturally.
They were partners in trade
Old Marley and he
And for no end of years.
Scrooge was to Marley
As was Marley to him
- No.323.** Executor
- No.322.** Assign
- No.323.** Sole Legatee

No.324. --In short, only he
Was present to grieve
And Scrooge signed his own name
To the death registry.

CAROLERS. SO BRING HIM INCENSE, GOLD AND MYRRH
COME PEASANT, KING TO OWN HIM
THE KING OF KINGS SALVATION BRINGS
LET LOVING HEARTS ENTHRONE HIM
THIS, THIS IS CHRIST THE KING
WHOM SHEPHERDS GUARD AND ANGELS SING
HASTE, HASTE TO BRING HIM LAUD
THE BABE THE SON OF MARY.

As they are singing, NO. 324 dons a clerical collar becoming "CLERGYMAN" and NO. 323 puts on spectacles becoming "CLERK" and holds a book and feather pen for SCROOGE to sign. NO. 322 becoming "MARLEY" as NO. 321 becomes "UNDERTAKER" and covers NO. 322 with a sheet. SCROOGE enters.

SCROOGE. (*Signing his name*) Mister. Ebenezer. Scrooge.

CLERGYMAN. For as much as it has pleased Almighty God to take
out of this world our beloved Jacob Marley--

SCROOGE. Bah!

CLERGYMAN. (*a cough*) We therefore commit his body to the ground,
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for
that blessed hope--

SCROOGE. Humbug!

*"WHAT CHILD IS THIS" ends. SCROOGE exits. CAROLERS exit.
THE SURPLUS become themselves again*

NO.322. But the sign stayed the same as ever it had
What did it matter that Marley was dead
Scrooge could answer to either.
Without conscience or care

No.324. Always providing
the *profits* were there
The Profits...
In the tight-fisted-

No.321. Hard-squeezing

No.322. Gold-grasping

No.323. Coal-clutching

No.324. Stone-grinding,

No.321. Fault-finding
No.322. Bony old hand
No.323. Of the covetous sinner
No.324. We call Ebenezer--
ALL. Scrooge!

THE FIDDLER plays "GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN" as THE SURPLUS themselves become the fixtures of Scrooge's office (A door with a bell which jingles as it opens, Cratchit's desk, Scrooge's Desk. Chairs alone are the actual furnishings) FRED enters, drops a coin in THE FIDDLE PLAYER'S hat. THE FIDDLE PLAYER continues playing as FRED approaches SCROOGE.

FRED. A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE, Bah! Humbug!

FRED. You don't mean that

SCROOGE. I do. Merry Christmas! 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!

(going to the door, or perhaps an imaginary window and addressing the FIDDLER)

Out with you! This is place of business!

THE FIDDLER exits continuing his song as he goes.

FRED. Uncle!

SCROOGE. You keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

FRED. 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!

FRED. There are many things from which I derive good, by which I have not profited. Christmas among the rest. When I think of Christmas, I'm sure I always think of it as a good time. A kind, forgiving, and pleasant time. The only time I know when men and women seem to open their shut-up hearts freely and think of people as fellow-passengers in this life. And therefore Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of silver or gold in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good. And I say God Bless it! God bless it!

CRATCHIT stands, applauding, SCROOGE glares at him. HE sits instantly.

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

FRED. Don't be angry, uncle. Come and dine with my wife and I tomorrow.

SCROOGE. Good afternoon.

FRED. I want nothing from you, I ask nothing of you. Why cannot we be friends? For my mother's sake. Your sister--

SCROOGE. GOOD AFTERNOON! Nephew!

A beat.

FRED. A Merry Christmas. Uncle.

SCROOGE. Bah!

FRED. And a happy new year.

FRED exits, as A DO-GOODER enters.

SCROOGE. Humbug.

DO-GOODER. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE. Why do you wish to know?

DO-GOODER. At this festive season of the year, it is more than usually desirable that we who are able should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time.

SCROOGE. Are there no prisons?

DO-GOODER. Plenty of prisons

SCROOGE. Workhouses? They are still in operation?

DO-GOODER. They are. I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE. I am very glad to hear it.

A beat.

DO-GOODER. Under the impression they scarce furnish Christian cheer of mind or body, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund for the Poor to provide food and drink and means of warmth. So, what may we put you down for sir?

SCROOGE. Nothing.

DO-GOODER. You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE. I wish to be left alone! I don't make merry at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned. Those who are badly off must go there.

DO-GOODER. Many can't go there. Many would rather die.

SCROOGE. They had better do it then and decrease the surplus population!

A brief pause in the action as THE SURPLUS POPULATION bow Grandly. Action resumes.

DO-GOODER. But Sir--

SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

THE DO-GOODER exits. Scrooge begins to ready himself to leave

CRATCHIT. Ahem. Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE. And I suppose you'll be wanting all day tomorrow?

CRATCHIT. If it's quite convenient

SCROOGE. It's not convenient. And it's not fair. If I was to hold back a half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used.

CRATCHIT. Well--it is only once a year, sir.

SCROOGE. A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December. But I suppose you must have the whole day.

CRATCHIT. Sir! Thank you Mr. Scrooge, sir.

SCROOGE exits. THE FIDDLE PLAYER re-enters, playing the lead in to DECK THE HALLS.

CRATCHIT. A whole day! A whole, blessed day!

(HE begins to sing and dance a jig as SCROOGE returns unnoticed)

DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY
FA-LA-LA-LA-LA. LA-LA-LA-LA
TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY
FA-LA-LA-LA-

SCROOGE. CRATCHIT!

CRATCHIT. *(startled)*-- LAAAAH!

SCROOGE. Be here all the earlier next morning.

CRATCHIT. Sir! I will Sir!

SCROOGE exits. CRATCHIT closes his book and begins to put on his scarf

CRATCHIT. *(softly)* DON WE NOW OUR GAY APPAREL

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA

TROLL THE ANCIENT YULETIDE CAROL

(bravely now) FA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LAAAAAH!

CRATCHIT exits, followed by THE SURPLUS with the fixtures of the office. LYRICS appear on the screen, CONGREGATION or AUDIENCE rises and sings.

SEE THE BLAZING YULE BEFORE US

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA. LA-LA-LA-LA

STRIKE THE HARP AND JOIN THE CHORUS

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA. LA-LA-LA-LA

FOLLOW ME IN MERRY MEASURE

FA-LA-LA- LA-LA LA- LA-LA-LA

WHILE I TELL OF YULETIDE TREASURE

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA LA-LA-LA

FAST AWAY THE OLD YEAR PASSES

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA. LA-LA-LA-LA

HAIL THE NEW YE LADS AND LASSES

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA. LA-LA-LA-LA

SING WE JOYOUS ALL TOGETHER

FA-LA-LA- LA-LA LA. LA-LA-LA

HEEDLESS OF THE WIND AND WEATHER

FA-LA-LA-LA-LA. LA-LA-LA-LA

NOTE: This is NOT the end of the play. For a full perusal script and performance information, please contact:

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