

- 1 A Christmas Carol - Reduced
A Shortened Version of a Christmas Classic

A CHRISTMAS CAROL - Reduced

by Lee Karvonen

CAST: EBENEZER SCROOGE, BOB CRATCHIT, TINY TIM, MRS. CRATCHIT, JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST, GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST, GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT, GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE, SCROOGE'S NEPHEW, NEPHEW'S WIFE, HOUSEKEEPER, VOLUNTEER

SCENE ONE - SCROOGE'S OFFICES

SCROOGE: BOB CRATCHIT! LATE AGAIN!

(rushing in)

CRATCHIT: I AM SO SORRY, MR. SCROOGE. I WAS JUST --

SCROOGE: I DON'T WANT EXCUSES; I WANT RESULTS!

CRATCHIT: YES, MR. SCROOGE. I'M SORRY, MR. SCROOGE.

SCROOGE: STOP BEING SORRY AND GET TO WORK!

CRATCHIT: YES, SIR, MR. SCROOGE.... UH, MR. SCROOGE?

SCROOGE: YES, CRATCHIT?

CRATCHIT: IT'S EVER SO COLD IN HERE. MIGHT I PUT A BIT MORE COAL IN THE STOVE?

SCROOGE: NO! IT IS WARM ENOUGH IN HERE NOW! YOU WILL NOT WASTE COAL IN MY OFFICES!

CRATCHIT: YES, MR. SCROOGE. I'M SORRY, MR. SCROOGE.

SCENE TWO - BOB CRATCHIT'S HOME

CRATCHIT: I'M HOME, MARTHA. WHERE IS EVERYBODY?

TINY TIM: HERE I AM, FATHER! DID YOU HAVE A GOOD DAY?

CRATCHIT: I WAS LATE TO WORK, COLD ALL DAY, AND KEPT LATE BY MR. SCROOGE. OTHER THAN THAT, IT WAS PERFECT.

MRS. CRATCHIT: THAT MAN! HONESTLY! HAS HE NO HEART?

TINY TIM: EVERYBODY HAS A HEART, MOTHER!

MRS. CRATCHIT: WITH MR. SCROOGE, YOU'D HAVE TO DIG DEEP!

CRATCHIT: WELL, ENOUGH OF MR. SCROOGE. IS SUPPER READY, MY DEAR?

MRS. CRATCHIT: YES, OF COURSE. NOW YOU SIT DOWN BY THE FIRE AND WARM YOURSELF, DEAR. YOU'VE HAD A LONG, COLD DAY.

SCENE THREE - SCROOGE'S OFFICES

VOLUNTEER: SO YOU SEE, MR.SCROOGE, IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO DONATE
A FEW POUNDS, SOME UNFORTUNATES WILL HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AFTER ALL.

SCROOGE: HUMBUG! WHY SHOULD I GIVE ANY MONEY TO PEOPLE WHO WON'T WORK?

VOLUNTEER: THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO NEED OUR HELP. THEY ARE UNABLE TO
SUPPORT THEMSELVES.

SCROOGE: A RE THERE NO WORKHOUSES?

VOLUNTEER: WELL, YES.

SCROOGE: THEN LET THEM TAKE CARE OF THESE SHIFTLESS FOOLS. THEN BUSYBODIES LIKE YOU WILL STOP BOTHERING BUSINESSMEN LIKE ME!

VOLUNTEER: BUT MR. SCROOGE, IT IS CHRISTMAS, AFTER ALL!

SCROOGE: BAH! HUMBUG! GOOD DAY TO YOU, SIR!

SCENE FOUR - SCROOGE'S OFFICES, LATER

NEPHEW: UNCLE SCROOGE, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

SCROOGE: HUMBUG! WHAT DO YOU WANT, NEPHEW? MONEY AGAIN, I SUPPOSE.

NEPHEW: NO, NO, UNCLE! I JUST WANT TO INVITE YOU TO DINNER TOMORROW, CHRISTMAS DAY. SARAH AND I WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU OVER!

SCROOGE: AND WHY IS THAT? SO YOU CAN COAX ME TO GIVE YOU MONEY! SO I'LL INCLUDE YOU IN MY WILL!

NEPHEW: UNCLE SCROOGE! WE JUST WANT YOU BECAUSE WE LIKE YOU! AND YOU'LL BE ALL ALONE ON CHRISTMAS. NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO SPEND CHRISTMAS ALONE.

SCROOGE: CHRISTMAS IS A DAY JUST LIKE ANY OTHER DAY, EXCEPT EMPLOYEES EXPECT TO GET A DAY OFF. SO THERE GOES MY PRODUCTIVITY, RIGHT OUT THE WINDOW! THE SOONER THAT DAY PASSES, THE BETTER!

NEPHEW: IT'S TOO BAD YOU FEEL THAT WAY, UNCLE, BUT THE INVITATION STILL STANDS. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

SCROOGE: GOODBYE! AND A HUMBUG TO YOU, SIR!

SCENE FIVE - SCROOGE'S LODGINGS

SCROOGE: (yawning) AHHH! TO BED! CHRISTMAS TOMORROW!
HUMBUG!

(falls asleep)
(clanking of chains)

WHA--, HUH... WHAT'S THAT NOISE? WHO'S THERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON?

MARLEY'S GHOST: EBENEEEE--ZER! EBENEEEE--ZER!

SCROOGE: WHO ARE YOU? STATE YOUR BUSINESS!

GHOST: EBENEEEE--ZER! IT'S JAAA--COB! JAAA--COB MARRR--
LEY!

SCROOGE: J-J-JACOB! BUT IT CAN'T BE! YOU'RE DEAD!

GHOST: THAT'S RIGHT, EBENEZER! I AM DEAD! BUT I'M DOOMED
TO WALK THE EARTH, HAULING THESE CHAINS FOREVER!

SCROOGE: WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET RID OF THEM, JACOB?

GHOST: THEY ARE MY CHAINS, EBENEZER! I FORGED THEM LINK
BY LINK, ALL MY LIFE! I CAN'T GET RID OF THEM!

SCROOGE: WELL, WHY ARE YOU BOTHERING ME THEN?

GHOST: BECAUSE IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR YOU, EBENEZER! YOU
CAN STILL CHANGE! YOU CAN CAST OFF YOUR CHAINS!

SCROOGE: WHAT CHAINS? I HAVEN'T ANY CHAINS! AND WHY
SHOULD I CHANGE? I LIKE ME THE WAY I AM!

GHOST: TRUST ME, EBENEZER, I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT! THEY DON'T LET JUST ANY DEAD PEOPLE GO
AROUND TELLING LIVE PEOPLE TO CHANGE!

SCROOGE: I MUST BE IMAGINING YOU! YOU'RE PROBABLY JUST MY INDIGESTION!

GHOST: I'M HERE, EBENEZER! BUT WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT, THERE ARE THREE VISITORS COMING TO SEE YOU TONIGHT, THREE CHRISTMAS GHOSTS - PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. HEED THEM WELL, EBENEZER! THEY ARE YOUR LAST CHANCE! HEED THEM AND CHANGE, WHILE YOU STILL CAN! (Ghost fades away.)

SCROOGE: JACOB! I CAN'T CHANGE! WAIT A MINUTE! THREE GHOSTS! NO! NO GHOSTS! JACOB! I REFUSE TO SEE ANY MORE GHOSTS TONIGHT! JACOB!

SCENE SIX - SCROOGE'S LODGINGS, LATER THAT EVENING

SCROOGE: (snoring, then hears a noise) HUH? WHAT'S THAT? (sits up) WHO'S THERE?

GHOST #1: GOOD EVENING, EBENEZER. I AM THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.

SCROOGE: WHAT DO YOU WANT? NO! GO AWAY! I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU!

GHOST #1: EBENEZER. I'M NOT HERE TO ARGUE WITH YOU. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.

SCROOGE: NO, I'M NOT! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

GHOST #1: COME WITH ME TO THE WINDOW, EBENEZER.... NOW!

SCROOGE: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

GHOST #1: OUT THERE.

SCROOGE: OUT THERE?

GHOST #1: OUT THERE.

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SCROOGE: BUT I'M ON THE THIRD FLOOR!

GHOST #1: DON'T WORRY. WE'RE GOING BY AIR.

SCROOGE: FLYING? BUT I DON'T FLY!

GHOST #1: OH, YES, YOU DO, WHEN YOU'RE WITH ME. (And they both leap out the window into the air.)

(off) SCROOGE: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

(off) GHOST #1: YOU'LL SEE!

SCENE SEVEN - (They reappear on a bare stage.)

SCROOGE: IT'S THE HOUSE WHERE I GREW UP!

GHOST #1: AND THERE YOU ARE AS A CHILD.

SCROOGE: THERE'S MY SISTER! FAN, OH, FAN!

GHOST#1: SHE CAN'T HEAR YOU, OR SEE YOU.

SCROOGE: SHE WAS SUCH A DEAR!

GHOST #1: AND SHE MADE YOU PROMISE TO DO THE RIGHT THING, DIDN'T SHE?

SCROOGE: WELL, YES, BUT ...

GHOST #1: THERE WAS NO BUT IN YOUR PROMISE, WAS THERE?

SCROOGE: N-NO.

GHOST #1: DID YOU KEEP YOUR PROMISE?

SCROOGE: I-I-I ...

GHOST #1: MOVING RIGHT ALONG.

SCROOGE: IT'S MY FI-- IT'S THE GIRL I WAS GOING TO MARRY!

GHOST #1: YES, AND SUCH A SWEET AND CHARMING GIRL TOO.

SCROOGE: THERE'S THE RING! I'M ABOUT TO PROPOSE TO HER!

GHOST #1: BUT SHE'S GOING TO TURN YOU DOWN, ISN'T SHE, EBENEZER?

SCROOGE: YES, BUT--

GHOST #1: SHE DIDN'T APPROVE OF THE WAY YOU WERE CONDUCTING YOURSELF, DID SHE?

SCROOGE: WELL, NO, BUT SHE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND BUSINESS. I WAS GOING TO BE A GREAT SUCCESS!

GHOST #1: AND WERE YOU, EBENEZER? WERE YOU A GREAT SUCCESS?

SCROOGE: I ... I-I THOUGHT I WAS.

GHOST #1: TIME TO MOVE ALONG, EBENEZER.

SCROOGE: BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR YEARS!

GHOST #1: TIME, EBENEZER.

SCROOGE: WHERE TO, GHOST?

GHOST #1: YOU'LL SEE.

SCROOGE: IT'S OLD FEZZIWIG'S CHRISTMAS PARTY! THERE I AM! AND THERE'S JACOB! MY OH MY, BUT WE WERE YOUNG THEN!

GHOST #1: FEZZIWIG'S CHRISTMAS PARTY. THE WHOLE OFFICE IS THERE. DANCING, SINGING, EATING, DRINKING, HAVING A GOOD TIME! AREN'T THEY?

SCROOGE: YES, THEY ARE.

GHOST #1: AND HOW MUCH DID IT COST OLD FEZZIWIG? A FEW POUNDS? AND LOOK AT THE JOY HE'S SPREADING!

SCROOGE: YES, BUT--

GHOST #1: NO BUTS! JUST THE JOY OF THE SEASON! BUT WHAT DID YOU AND JACOB DO TO HIM?

SCROOGE: BUT THAT WAS BUSINESS! JUST BUSINESS!

GHOST #1: JUST BUSINESS?!?! YOU FORCED HIM OUT WHEN HE WAS DOWN! YOU TOOK OVER HIS BUSINESS FOR A SONG, FOR LESS THAN A SONG! AND DID YOU TWO GIVE CHRISTMAS PARTIES LIKE FEZZIWIG DID? NO! CHRISTMAS IS JUST HUMBUG TO YOU!

SCROOGE: BUT I--

GHOST #1: NO BUTS, EBENEZER! YOU HAVE NOT BEEN A NICE MAN! BUT YOU CAN CHANGE! THERE'S STILL TIME!

SCROOGE: I'M TOO OLD TO CHANGE! I CAN'T CHANGE!

GHOST #1: THINK ON IT HARD, EBENEZER! THERE ARE TWO MORE GHOSTS COMING!

(Ghost fades away. Scrooge is back in his room.)

SCROOGE: I CAN'T CHANGE! I'M TOO OLD TO CHANGE! I-- HE'S GONE!

(another noise)

SCROOGE: OH, NO! NOT ANOTHER GHOST! WHY DON'T THEY HAUNT SOMEONE ELSE! I CAN'T CHANGE!

GHOST #2: EBENEZER! EBENEZER!

SCROOGE: YOU MUST BE THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

GHOST #2: YOU'RE A SHARP ONE, AREN'T YOU? YOU MUST BE AFTER THE PRIZE!

SCROOGE: WHAT PRIZE?

GHOST #2: NEVER MIND! COME WITH ME! YOU'RE GOING TO REVISIT YOUR DAY!

SCROOGE: MUST I?

GHOST #2: OH, YES! YOU MUST! TIME FOR ANOTHER FLYING LEAP!
(Out the window they go.)

SCROOGE: (off) OH, NOOOOO!

GHOST #2: (off) OH, YEEEEESSS!
(They reappear on a bare stage.)

SCROOGE: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

GHOST #2: YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN OFFICE!?

SCROOGE: OH, RIGHT. AND THERE'S THAT DREADFUL VOLUNTEER.

GHOST #2: HE IS A KIND MAN ASKING FOR A CHRISTMAS DONATION, FOR THE POOR! AND WHAT DID YOU GIVE HIM? A POUND? A SHILLING? A FEW PENCE? NO, YOU GAVE HIM A PIECE OF YOUR MIND THAT HE DIDN'T NEED AND THEN YOU SHOWED HIM THE DOOR! WHERE IS YOUR HEART? WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT PROMISE YOU GAVE YOUR SISTER SO LONG AGO?

SCROOGE: I-I-I--

GHOST #2: YOU ARE PATHETIC, EBENEZER! WHAT WOULD IT HAVE COST YOU TO BE NICE? WHAT MAKES IT SO DIFFICULT TO PART WITH A FEW POUNDS AT CHRISTMAS FOR THOSE LESS FORTUNATE? DON'T YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU?

SCROOGE: I-I-I--

GHOST #2: YOU ARE UNBELIEVABLE! LET'S SEE SOME MORE EXAMPLES OF YOUR GENEROSITY!

SCROOGE: WHERE ARE WE GO--

GHOST #2: WE'RE ALREADY THERE!

SCROOGE: IT'S MY NEPHEW'S PLACE! IT SEEMS SO WARM AND COSY!

GHOST #2: NO THANKS TO YOU! HE DOES ALL RIGHT.

SCROOGE: HE'S SAYING HE FEELS SORRY FOR ME! FOR ME! BUT I HAVE EVERYTHING I WANT! AND HE HAS SO LITTLE!

GHOST #2: HE HAS A VERY NICE WIFE!

SCROOGE: AND SHE FEELS SORRY FOR ME TOO! HOW CAN THAT BE? I'VE NEVER DONE A THING FOR EITHER OF THEM!

GHOST #2: NO, YOU HAVEN'T, HAVE YOU! YOU JUST CAN'T FIGURE SOME PEOPLE, CAN YOU, EBENEZER!

SCROOGE: AND I WAS SO CRUEL TO HIM TODAY, SO NASTY!

GHOST #2: YES, YOU WERE! BUT WHO CARES? YOU SURE DON'T! MOVING RIGHT ALONG!

SCROOGE: WHERE?

GHOST #2: TO VISIT SOME MORE LOSERS, AS YOU MIGHT SAY!

SCROOGE: IT'S BOB CFRATCHIT'S HOUSE! MY, IT'S SMALL! HOW CAN ALL THOSE PEOPLE LIVE IN THAT TINY HOUSE?

GHOST #2: HOW ABOUT THAT? I WAS JUST GOING TO ASK YOU THAT!

SCROOGE: LOOK AT THAT TINY GOOSE! AND THAT LITTLE POT OF PUNCH! AND YET THEY ARE SO HAPPY! WHAT DO THEY HAVE TO BE HAPPY ABOUT?