

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!

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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.