

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (SAMPLE)

CAST LIST

** denotes characters that could double up*

Tramp*
Ragged child*
Woman with baby*
Man*
Scrooge
Bob Cratchit
Fred
1st Lady*
2nd Lady*
Mrs Dilber
Ghost of Jacob Marley
Spirit of Christmas Past
Boy Scrooge*
Fan*
Mr Fezziwig*
Mrs Fezziwig*
Young Scrooge
Belle*
Belle's Husband*
Spirit of Christmas Present
Mrs Cratchit
Belinda
Martha
Tiny Tim
Alice*
Aunt Louise*
Mary*
Ignorance*
Want*
Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come*
Pawnbroker*
Mrs Fellowes*
Boy's voice offstage*

Possible 30 speaking parts. Could be less with doubling. 3 Non-speaking parts. Other non speaking parts could be added.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

SCENE 1

(The scene is a London street on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. Church bells begin to ring. There are some ragged children warming their hands round a brazier. A woman with a baby is begging in the street. A man and woman are window shopping. A tramp enters and comes forward to address the audience.)

TRAMP

It is just past three o'clock on Christmas Eve but it is quite dark already. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackle in the lamp heat of the windows make pale faces red as they pass. In the main street some labourers are repairing gas pipes and they have lit a great fire in a brazier, around which ragged children are gathered, warming their hands.

RAGGED CHILD

The Lord Mayor, in his mighty Mansion House, gives orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's House should; and even the little tailor whom he fined five shillings on Monday last for being drunk in the streets, is stirring up the Christmas pudding in his bare house, while his wife and baby go and buy a small joint of beef.

WOMAN WITH BABY

Christmas Eve, a time when all men, rich or poor, rejoice in the fellowship of man. All men except one.

Here we have the offices of Scrooge and Marley. Let it be understood from the beginning that Marley is dead. There can be no doubt of that. Seven years ago this very night he died, and this must be distinctly understood or nothing wonderful can come from the story that is about to unfold.

MAN *(Shopping with his wife)*

Scrooge and Marley were partners for many years. Ebenezer Scrooge - a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner. Hard and sharp as flint. It is his story that we tell tonight. Hush now, here he comes.

(Ebenezer Scrooge enters)

TRAMP

Merry Christmas sir. Spare a penny for an unfortunate destitute.

SCROOGE

Get out of my way man. I do not give charity to you or anyone else, whether it be Christmas or not.

TRAMP

Yes sir. Merry Christmas anyway sir.

SCROOGE

Christmas! Bah! Humbug!

(Scrooge goes into his office)

END OF SCENE

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SCENE 2

(Inside the offices of Scrooge and Marley. Scrooge is alone. He has a cash box out and is counting out some money. Bob Cratchit enters, removes his hat and coat, but leaves his scarf and gloves on.)

BOB

Ah. Mr Scrooge sir. I have delivered those letters you left for me. How are you this morning?

SCROOGE

Huh! Business is quiet due to this foolishness called Christmas. Make a note Cratchit, that everyone who owes me money and says that they cannot pay this week because it is Christmas, will be charged an extra shilling next week.

BOB

Yes sir.

(Bob Cratchit goes over to his desk to write but it is so cold that he cannot hold his pen properly.)

BOB

Mr Scrooge, might we put some more coal on the fire please? It is very cold today.

SCROOGE

No we may not. I do not feel the cold and neither should you . Coal costs money Mr Cratchit and I do not burn money lightly.

BOB

No sir.

(There is a knock at the door. Bob Cratchit goes to answer it.)

BOB

Mr Fred! Merry Christmas sir!

FRED

Merry Christmas Mr Cratchit. Is my uncle here?

SCROOGE

Yes I am. What do you want?

FRED

Only to wish you a Merry Christmas uncle.

SCROOGE

Christmas! Bah! Humbug!

FRED

Christmas a humbug? You don't mean that I'm sure.

SCROOGE

I do. What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

FRED

Well, what right have you to be unhappy? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE

Why do I have to listen to such fools. What is Christmastime to you but a time for paying bills without money - a time for finding yourself a year older and not a penny richer? If I had my way, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" upon his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!

FRED

Come now uncle. Don't be angry. Come and dine with us tomorrow night.

SCROOGE

I don't keep Christmas. Now go away and leave me alone!

FRED

I am sorry that you feel that way. I'll say goodbye and Merry Christmas once more.

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

(Fred leaves. Bob Cratchit goes back to his desk but there is another knock at the door. He gets up and lets in two charitable ladies.)

1ST LADY

Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?

SCROOGE

Mr Marley has been dead these seven years. In fact he died seven years ago this very night.

2ND LADY

Oh dear how sad. Still I have no doubt that you will be able to help us.

1ST LADY

Yes. At this festive season of the year, a few of us are trying to make some provision for the poor and homeless. Many thousands of people are in want of the common comforts sir.

SCROOGE

Are there no prisons?

2ND LADY

Oh plenty of prisons I am sorry to say.

SCROOGE

And the workhouses, are they still in operation?

1ST LADY

They are. I wish I could say that they are not.

SCROOGE

I am very glad to hear it. My taxes help to support the prisons and workhouses. If people are in need let them go there.

2ND LADY

But many would rather die than go there.

SCROOGE

Well then, they had better die and decrease the surplus population. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I cannot afford to make idle people merry. Good day ladies.

(The ladies leave, very shocked. Some carol singers start to sing at the door. Scrooge leaps up and opens the door.)

SCROOGE

Be off with you, you young ruffians! Cease that noise immediately!

(He comes back to his desk.)

SCROOGE

A whole afternoon's business wasted with irritating nonsense. Well, I suppose you had better go now Cratchit.

BOB

Thank you sir.

SCROOGE

You want all day off tomorrow I suppose?

BOB

Yes please sir.

SCROOGE

And if I was to stop you half a crown for the day you will not be working, I suppose you would think it unfair eh?

BOB

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 day off. Be here all the earlier next morning.

BOB

Yes sir.

(Bob Cratchit dashes off and Scrooge closes up the office grumbling to himself.)

END OF SCENE.