



EBENEZER SCROOGE
BY
RICHARD HILLS

Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

**This script is protected by copyright laws.
No performance of this script -IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without
payment of the appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.
For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at
info@smithscripts.co.uk**

EBENEZER SCROOGE

Based on the Dickens story

And freely adapted by

RICHARD HILLS

THE CHARACTERS

FRED	Scrooge's Nephew and Narrator
BOB CRATCHIT	Clerk to Ebenezer Scrooge
EBENEZER SCROOGE	Old Partner of Marley and Scrooge
GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY	Spectre of Scrooge's Partner
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST	Phantom showing the past
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT	A kind and generous Spirit
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE	Showing shadow of which may happen
MRS CRATCHIT	Wife of Bob Cratchit
MR BRAMLEY	Husband of Belle
MRS BELLE BRAMLEY	Old sweet heart of Scrooge

The following small parts can be doubled or trebled

1st WOMAN	MR FEZZIWIGG
2nd WOMAN	MRS FEZZIWIGG
BILL	MISS FEZZIWIGG
BERT	FIDDLER
MR MARSDEN	YOUNG EBENEZER
CAROL SINGER	YOUNG BELLE
DRUNK	BRAMLEY'S DAUGHTER
FAN	PETER CRATCHIT
MARTHA CRATCHIT	DICK WILKINS
FRED'S WIFE	TINY TIM
MRS DIBLER	OLD JOE
MRS CHESWICK	MR CHESWICK
BOY	GIRL
BUTCHER	

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Prologue	Christmas Carols
ACT 1	
Scene 1	Scrooge's office, afternoon of Christmas Eve
Scene 2	Street outside Scrooge's Office, a few minutes later
Scene 3	Scrooge's bedroom, late on Christmas Eve
ACT 2	Ebenezer Scrooge's other dream
ACT 3	
Scene 1	Early Christmas morning
Scene 2	Scrooge makes amends
Scene 3	On the way home
Scene 4	Back to work the next day

PROLOGUE

(The light comes up on the front of tabs. Carol Singers enter DL singing a carol. At end of carol, FRED, SCROOGE'S nephew enters DR.)

FRED: Hello Friends! Happy Christmas!

CAROL SINGERS: Hello, Fred! Happy Christmas!

FRED: I am just going to visit my Uncle Scrooge. Come along and give him a song.

1st CAROL SINGER: No thank you. He doesn't believe in Christmas.

2nd CAROL SINGER: We asked him for money when he came past us.

3rd CAROL SINGER: All he gave us was "Humbug!"

FRED: That is my uncle. He is always the same. He doesn't believe in giving money.

1st CAROL SINGER: So why do you go to see him?

FRED: Always in the hope that he will change.

2nd CAROL SINGER: That is the day Pigs will fly.

FRED: Well, there is always hope that he will change.

3rd CAROL SINGER: We have better things to do than visit him. We are raising money for the poor.

FRED: Carry on friends! Put this in your collection.

1st CAROL SINGER: Thank you, Fred! We will see it helps the poor. *(They exit DL.)*

FRED: *(Looking at the audience.)* So, here I am friends, here to tell you the story of my Uncle Scrooge, to show you the error of his ways. To make sure you do not follow in his footsteps. Come with me now to his office to wish him a merry Christmas. *(And so he crosses and exits DL.)*

ACT 1 Scene 1

(The curtains open on EBENEZER'S OFFICE. The office is built on two trucks side by side. When the trucks are turned round they show the outside of the office when used in the street scene.)

On the R of the R truck there is a small window overlooking the street. In the UR wall there is the doorway into the office from the street. There is a small fireplace in the corner by an arch dividing the two trucks. The fire is out. A tall desk is centre of the truck with a stool behind it. There are letters, a quill, ink-stand and a lighted candle on the desk. This is BOB CRATCHIT'S desk.

On the adjoining truck the other side of the arch, there is a small fireplace in the UR corner. The fire is alight and it has a small coal-scuttle and shovel beside it. There is a coat-hanger on the wall with SCROOGE'S coat hanging on it. A bench L with some ledgers on it, and C there is a tall desk with a stool behind it. On the desk is a large ledger, quill, ink-stand, and a lighted candle.

When the curtains open, SCROOGE is sitting at his desk writing in the large ledger. BOB CRATCHIT is bending down trying to rake an ember in the fireplace of his room.)

EBENEZER: You working, Cratchit? I hope you are not playing around with that fire. I don't pay you to do nothing.

BOB: It has gone out.

EBENEZER: Get on with your work. I want those letters copied before you go.

(BOB CRATCHIT wraps his white comforter around his neck, sits on his stool and tries to warm his hands over the candle.)

FRED: *(Opening the shop door and entering.)* Afternoon Cratchit! My uncle here?

BOB: Yes Sir, he is in his office.

FRED: *(Crossing to SCROOGE'S office.)* Merry Christmas, Uncle!

EBENEZER: *(Looking over his glasses.)* Bah! Humbug!

FRED: Christmas a humbug, uncle? Surely you do not mean that?

EBENEZER: I do! What reason have you to be merry? You are poor enough.

FRED: What right have you to be dismal? You are rich enough.

EBENEZER: I have to work for it.

(BOB CRATCHIT tries to write but has to warm his hands from time to time on the candle.)

FRED: I have to work for my living.

EBENEZER: Then you go and spend it and have to borrow off of me.

FRED: I wouldn't borrow off of you, Uncle; your price is too high.

EBENEZER: I have to make a living.

FRED: Out of other fools.

EBENEZER: I live in a fool's world. What is Christmas but a time for paying bills with money you haven't got. Then spending more money you haven't got?

FRED: I always pay my bills.

EBENEZER: Most people do not. Then they have to borrow off of me.

FRED: And get further in debt.

EBENEZER: More fools them.

FRED: Christmas is a time for giving.

EBENEZER: Time for finding you are a year older and not an hour richer. Every idiot going about shouting "Merry Christmas" should be boiled with his own pudding

FRED: Uncle!

EBENEZER: Keep Christmas in your way. I will keep it in mine.

FRED: But you don't keep it.

EBENEZER: What good has it ever done you?

FRED: Christmas is a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time, the only time in the year when men and women open their hearts and give freely to those who have not.

(BOB CRATCHIT applauds from the other office.)

EBENEZER: Another sound from you Cratchit and you will keep Christmas by loosing your situation.

FRED: Don't be angry, uncle! Come dine with us tomorrow.

EBENEZER: Why, for what reason?

FRED: I want nothing from you. Why cannot we be friends?

EBENEZER: Friends! Good afternoon to you, sir!

FRED: *(About to go, turns back.)* Merry Christmas, uncle! Oh, and a happy new year! *(He crosses into other office and opens street door, then turns to BOB CRATCHIT.)* Merry Christmas, Cratchit!

BOB: And the same to you, sir.

(FRED exits.)

EBENEZER: My clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas? Bah!

(MR BRAMLEY enters from the street.)

MR BRAMLEY: Scrooge and Marley, I believe?

BOB: Through there, sir. *(He points at the arch.)*

MR BRAMLEY: *(Entering through arch.)* Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?

EBENEZER: Mr Marley has been dead seven years this very night.

MR BRAMLEY: At this time of year, Mr Scrooge, it is time we make provision for the poor and destitute, many in want of common necessities.

EBENEZER: Are there no prisons?

MR BRAMLEY: Indeed, sir.

EBENEZER: And the Union workhouses?

MR BRAMLEY: I wish I could say they were not.

EBENEZER: The Treadmill and the Poor Law in full vigour, then?

MR BRAMLEY: Both very busy, sir.

EBENEZER: I am glad to hear it. I was afraid something had happened to stop their useful course.

MR BRAMLEY: *(Taking a list from his pocket.)* A few of us are endeavouring to raise funds to buy meat and drink for the poor, the needy at this time of the year. What shall I put you down for?

EBENEZER: Nothing.

MR BRAMLEY: You wish to remain anonymous?

EBENEZER: I wish to be left alone. I don't make myself merry at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I support the establishments I have mentioned. They cost enough.

MR BRAMLEY: Many can't go there, and many would rather die.

EBENEZER: Let them die! It will help to decrease the surplus population.

MR BRAMLEY: I had hoped you might have been a little generous at this time of year.

EBENEZER: If you please, time and money and I have work to do. Good afternoon to you, sir!

MR BRAMLEY: Good day to you, sir! *(He turns and crosses to CRATCHIT'S office.)* A most ungenerous man! *(He exits to street.)*

EBENEZER: Has he gone?

BOB: Yes, Mr Scrooge.

EBENEZER: *(Crossing to CRATCHIT'S office.)* You will be wanting all day tomorrow, I suppose?

BOB: If convenient, sir.

EBENEZER: It is not convenient and it is not fair! If I was to stop you half a crown for it, you would think yourself ill-used. And yet you do not think me ill-used when I pay you a day's wages for no work.

BOB: It is Christmas, sir.

EBENEZER: A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket. If you must have the whole day off, be here earlier the next morning.

BOB: Thank you kindly, sir. *(He takes his cap from his desk, puts it on, and crosses to the door.)* Merry Christmas, Mr Scrooge! *(He exits hurriedly.)*

EBENEZER: Bah! Humbug! *(He turns back to his office.)*

(The tab curtains close on the end of scene.)

ACT 1 Scene 2

(The scene opens in front of tab curtains while they turn the two trucks round behind the curtains. The tab curtains open to reveal the street outside Scrooge's office. A wing can be placed on either side of the trucks showing shops. There are entrances and exits above and below the wing flats and below tab curtains.)

FRED: *(Entering front of tabs DR.)* Now you have met my uncle Ebenezer Scrooge, what do you think of him? How would you like to have an uncle like him? One who thinks more of money than his fellow citizens, a man who everyone despises? I would not like to be in his shoes, to not understand what Christmas is all about, and not to take part in a carol or two.

(The Carol Singers enter DL and cross to FRED singing a verse of a carol. They stop CS to sing the second verse and Fred joins in.)

FRED: This my friends is Christmas!

(The carol singers sing another verse as they cross in front of FRED and exit DR.)

FRED: Let us continue with our story. It is a street outside of Scrooge's office. *(He exits DL.)*

(The tab curtains open on the street scene. A boy and a woman are standing warming their hands by a man who is roasting and selling chestnuts DL. MRS CRATCHIT and another lady enter with shopping bags UR. They move DR. chatting.)

1st WOMAN: You been Christmas shopping, Mrs Cratchit?

MRS CRATCHIT: Just a few bits for Christmas dinner, can't afford much on Bob's wages.

1st WOMAN: Life is hard, with my old man spending half his life down the Pub.

MRS CRATCHIT: Managed to get a small chicken for tomorrow. *(She pulls it out of her bag.)* All skin and bone least ways, we can make some soup from it. Better than nothing.

1st WOMAN: Beggars can't be choosers, that is what I say.

MRS CRATCHIT: I must try and do something for Tiny Tim's sake.

1st WOMAN: How is the boy these days?

MRS CRATCHIT: Not so good, he seems to be wasting away.

1st WOMAN: Needs some good nourishing meals that are what he needs.

MRS CRATCHIT: Don't us all. Must do the best we can for him.

1st WOMAN: Can't old Scrooge do something for him?

MRS CRATCHIT: You won't get anything out of him.

1st WOMAN: Pity when there is those around with more money than they know what to do with it.

MRS CRATCHIT: It will burn a hole in his pocket.

1st WOMAN: You coming my way?

MRS CRATCHIT: I'm waiting for my Bob.

1st WOMAN: I will be getting along. I must drag my old man out of the Pub before he spends it all. Have a good day tomorrow.

MRS CRATCHIT: That is if Bob gets the day off.

1st WOMAN: Be seeing you then. *(She crosses and exits DL.)*

(Bob comes out of Scrooge's office and sees the Chestnut man.)

BOB: How are you, Bert?

BERT: Could be better if I had some customers. *(Turning to people standing warming their hands.)* Go on, scram! You are scaring everyone away!

2nd WOMAN: Can't a girl warm her hands?

BERT: Scram!

(The woman and boy move DL.)

BOB: *(Seeing MRS CRATCHIT.)* Hello, love! Waiting for me?

MRS CRATCHIT: Just been shopping. I hope you have got tomorrow off?

BOB: Touch and go. The old blighter didn't like it, accused me of picking his pockets. Thinks he is ill-used for paying me for a day off.

MRS CRATCHIT: The old skin flint!

BOB: Get anything for Christmas?

MRS CRATCHIT: Managed a chicken, all skin and bone. You should have seen the goose in the butcher's window, big enough to feed a family for a fortnight.

BOB: That is some goose. Anyway, we will do our best for the kids.

MRS CRATCHIT: Must do the best we can in case it is Tiny Tim's last Christmas.

BOB: Don't say that, love. All he needs is a few good dinners to pull him through.

MRS CRATCHIT: Where are we going to get them, that is what I want to know.

(They both exit DL.)

MR MARSDEN: *(Entering UR and crossing to Chestnut man.)* Can I have a bag of chestnuts, please?

BERT: *(Serving him.)* There you are, sir! Hot and ready to eat. *(Takes the money and hands over the bag of chestnuts.)*

2nd WOMAN: *(Moving to the gentleman as he comes DR.)* Got a tanner for a girl, sir?

MR MARSDEN: Go away!

2nd WOMAN: It is Christmas! Tanner for a drink!

MR MARSDEN: I said, go away!

(She goes back up to Chestnut man. The boy crosses to MR MARSDEN.)

BILL: You see that, sir?

MR MARSDEN: What?

BILL: *(Pointing in shop window.)* Look in that shop window, sir.

MR MARSDEN: See what?

(The boy grabs MR MARSDEN'S pocket watch and runs off DR.)

MR MARSDEN: Hey! Come back thief! *(He runs off after the boy.)* Stop that boy! Stop thief!

(The Carol Singers enter UL and stop outside EBENEZER'S office. They start to sing a carol. The door opens and EBENEZER comes out in his hat and coat.)

EBENEZER: Scram the lot of you! Scram, I say!

(The Carol Singers stop singing as he turns to lock the door.)

CAROL SINGER: *(shaking tin.)* Have you some money sir, a gift for the poor?

EBENEZER: Have you nothing better to do?

CAROL SINGER: For the poor at Christmas!

EBENEZER: Bah! Humbug! *(He stomps off DL.)*

(The Carol Singers cross and exit DR. FRED enters UL and comes to DC.)

FRED: Such is life even on Christmas Eve. Anything can happen while most people are preparing for Christmas day.

2nd WOMAN: *(Entering DR.)* Excuse me, sir! Got a tanner for a poor girl?

FRED: What do you intend doing with it?

2nd WOMAN: What do you think, get a drink, it is a cold night.

FRED: Do more good to get a meal inside you. *(He gives her sixpence.)* Go and get a good meal that will do more good than a drink.

2nd WOMAN: Thank you, sir. I will do that. *(She hurries off DL.)*

FRED: There she goes, not to get a meal, but straight to a Pub. She will never know Demon Drink has got her in its grasp.

MR MARSDEN: *(Off stage DR.)* Stop that boy! Stop thief!

BILL: *(Running on DR.)* Out of my way, let me by!

FRED: *(Grabbing hold of boy.)* Not so fast, boy! What have you been up to?

MR MARSDEN: *(Puffing in DR.)* Thank you, sir! Blighter stole my watch.

FRED: *(Holding boy.)* Stole his watch, eh?

BILL: *(Struggling.)* No I didn't! I haven't seen his bleeding watch!

MR MARSDEN: Look in his pockets!

FRED: Come on, boy! Empty your pockets.

BILL: Not flipping likely! I haven't got anything!

FRED: Then you will not mind emptying your pockets.

MR MARSDEN: Hold him, sir! I will search his pockets.

BILL: You can't do that!

FRED: Oh, yes he can.

(FRED holds the boy while MR MARSDEN searches his pockets.)

BILL: Let me go! I haven't done anything!

MR MARSDEN: *(Taking out watch.)* This is my watch!

FRED: So you didn't take it, boy?

BILL: I don't know how it got there. He must have put it there.

FRED: Won't work, boy. You stole it.

MR MARSDEN: He should be locked up.

FRED: Seeing you got your watch back and seeing that it is Christmas, we will let him go. *(He let's go of the boy.)*

BILL: Garn it! You mucked up my Christmas! My old man will lock me in the coal hole if I take nothing home.

MR MARSDEN: Take this, boy, and think yourself lucky. *(He gives him two pence.)*

BILL: Two pence? I will get my ears bashed for that! *(He runs off DL.)*

MR MARSDEN: Thank you kind sir for your help.

FRED: Pleased to be of service.

MR MARSDEN: Merry Christmas, sir.

FRED: And to you, sir.

(MR MARSDEN doffs his hat and exits DR.)

FRED: Now, where was I? There are those that try to help others and them that live to help themselves. Those who spend Christmas Eve in the Pub and those....

(A DRUNK staggers in DL singing at the top of his voice. He staggers over to FRED CS and doffs his cap.)

DRUNK: Merry Christmas, sir, and a happy New Year. *(He staggers past FRED and exits DR.)*

FRED: Those who spend Christmas Eve in the Pub, and those who go to bed early, so to see what Father Christmas has left them. Most are lucky to get an apple or orange in their sock.

(The lights fade to blackout and then come up again to denote the passing of a few hours. Church bells start ringing in the distance.)

FRED: There go the church bells.

(MR and MRS BRAMLEY enter DR. MR BRAMLEY doffs his hat to FRED as they pass and exit arm in arm DL.)

FRED: Some go to Church for Midnight Mass. Some like Scrooge go to bed to dream of making money. Midnight is almost upon us. Soon the hour of midnight will strike and it will be Christmas day. *(He turns and exits DR.)*

(The Church clock strikes midnight. EBENEZER climbs up steps from behind his office and into his bedroom, dressed in his nightshirt and cap, about to go to bed. He puts a lit lantern on the bedside table.)

EBENEZER: Have I put my money away? Yes I have locked it up. Now I can go to bed. *(He is about to get into bed and then stops.)* Silly me, I haven't locked the bedroom door. Must lock the door, can't have thieves stealing my money while I sleep. *(He makes out locking a door.)* Now to bed! *(He gets into bed and pulls the sheets over him.)* I must make Cratchit work hard when he comes back. Make up for the day he has off tomorrow. *(He disappears behind the sheet.)*

(The Church clock starts to strike midnight. We hear the sound of a door slamming shut off UR. EBENEZER'S head appears above the sheet.)

EBENEZER: What was that?

(The sound of footsteps coming up the stairs and a door opening.)

EBENEZER: I must be dreaming. Oh, help! I am awake! What is it?

(The ghost of MARLEY enters in his pigtail, waistcoat, tights and boots. The chains he drags clasped about his middle, is made of keys, padlocks and heavy purses wrought in steel.)

EBENEZER: Help! Is it you Marley! Is it really you?

(MARLEY'S ghost moves towards him.)

EBENEZER: What do you want with me?

MARLEY: Much!

EBENEZER: You can't be Marley!

MARLEY: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

EBENEZER: *(Looking frighten at him.)* Can you....can you sit down?

MARLEY: I can.

EBENEZER: Do it then. You frighten me standing there.

MARLEY: *(Sitting on a trunk.)* You do not believe in me?

EBENEZER: I do not!

MARLEY: Why do you doubt your senses?

EBENEZER: Because little things affect them. A disorder of the stomach, you may be an undigested bit of beef, a crumb of cheese, an under done potato.

MARLEY: I am not.

EBENEZER: You see this toothpick? *(He sits on the bed and picks up a toothpick from the chair by his bed.)*

MARLEY: I do.

EBENEZER: You are not looking at it.

MARLEY: I can see it all the same.

EBENEZER: I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug I tell you!