

TWISTING CAROL  
Jonathan Dorf

wrenched from A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Charles Dickens

## List of Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge  
Man on the Street  
Cratchit  
Fred  
First Gentleman  
Second Gentleman  
Marley's Ghost  
Ghost of Christmas Past  
3 Judges  
Young Scrooge  
Voice of the Female Puppet  
Voice of Fezziwig  
Ghost of Christmas Present  
Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come  
Short Tim  
Mrs. Cratchit  
Peter  
Martha  
Fred's Wife  
Fred's Sister  
Topper  
Iggy  
First Vendor  
Second Vendor  
Vendors' Boy  
Customers  
Boy on the Street

Multiple casting is expected and can be used to fairly comical results. For the most economical/comical casting, try the following:

Scrooge  
Cratchit  
First Gentleman/Marley's Ghost/Fezziwig's Voice/First Vendor  
Second Gentleman/Panelist/Christmas Present/Second Vendor  
Man on the Street/Topper  
Fred/Panelist/Christmas Future  
Christmas Past/Martha/Fred's Wife/Female Customer  
Panelist/Voice of Female Puppet/Mrs. Cratchit/Fred's Sister  
Young Ebenezer/Peter  
Short Tim/Iggy/Vendors' Boy/Boy on the Street

## SCENE 1

(Enter EBENEZER SCROOGE, old and surly, with a sock puppet made up to look like a sheep on his hand. It speaks.)

### SCROOGE

(through the sheep puppet)

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.

(Enter the MAN ON THE STREET.)

### MAN ON THE STREET

Excuse me. There's a dead body on your roof.

(He points at a roof downstage beyond the audience and gets no reaction from Scrooge. Brief pause)

I said there's a dead body on your roof, and it really stinks.

(brief pause)

Hello?

(The Man on the Street puts a hand in front of Scrooge's mouth and checks for breath. Not satisfied, he pulls out a stethoscope and checks for a heartbeat. A la Frankenstein)

It's alive!

(Scrooge swats him away.)

Scrooge was his sole executor and sole mourner.

(brief pause)

Their firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name from the sign. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley.

### SCROOGE

Whatever.

(Exit the Man on the Street as Scrooge goes upstage to his "office": lights up on Scrooge's chair and desk, and nearby, the ridiculously child-sized chair but normal-sized desk where BOB CRATCHIT sits. Cratchit should be invisible to Scrooge behind the desk because of the height of the chair.)

Cratchit!

### CRATCHIT

Here, sir.

### SCROOGE

Do something.

**CRATCHIT**

I need a new pen, sir.

**SCROOGE**

What's wrong with the pen I gave you?

**CRATCHIT**

It ran out of ink last year.

(Enter FRED, Scrooge's nephew.)

**FRED**

Merry Christmas, Uncle.

**SCROOGE**

(through the puppet)

Bah. Humbug!

**FRED**

Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that. Do you smell something? I love Christmas.

**SCROOGE**

Cratchit! Where'd Cratchit go?

(Cratchit pokes a hand out from behind the desk.)

**CRATCHIT**

Still here, sir!

**FRED**

I love my wife. I love your sheep. I love the sound of music. I love the way a gentle rains falls through the leaves at dusk. I love—

**SCROOGE**

Get a hold of yourself!

**FRED**

Have dinner with us tomorrow, Uncle.

**SCROOGE**

Cratchit? You better not have cut out early.

**CRATCHIT**

Still here, sir.

**SCROOGE**

(to Fred)

Good afternoon.

**FRED**

But Uncle—it's Christmas.

**SCROOGE**

Oh right. Sorry.

(holds up the sheep)

Bah. Humbug!

**FRED**

Uncle—

**SCROOGE**

Good afternoon.

**FRED**

But—

**SCROOGE**

Good afternoon.

**FRED**

B—

**SCROOGE**

Good afternoon.

(Fred feints as if about to speak to see if Scrooge will interrupt. Quickly, before Scrooge can speak again.)

**FRED**

If you change your mind . . .

(Exit Fred, passing two GENTLEMEN on his way out.)

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Good afternoon. Do we have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

(to the First Gentleman)

It smells like something died in here.

**SCROOGE**

Mr. Marley died seven years ago this very night.

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

We have no doubt his liberality is represented—

**SCROOGE**

Liberality? Libera—you said the "L" word!

(Scrooge pushes them out. The First Gentleman gets a foot in the door. Scrooge, his back against the door, continues to try to push him out. The First Gentleman slides a packet through the space in the door.)

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Personalized address labels?

(brief pause)

At this festive season, we should make some provision for the poor and destitute—

**SCROOGE**

Are there no prisons? No workhouses, outhouses, greenhouses, doghouses or henhouses?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

All very busy. What shall I put you down for?

**SCROOGE**

You may say I'm ugly or old or that my mother was a sailor. Put me down anyway you like, but you'll get no money out of me. If they don't like their present situation, the poor can go play in traffic and decrease the surplus population. And take me off your mailing list.

(Scrooge kicks at the First Gentleman's foot, which finally disappears. Scrooge closes the door.)

Cratchit, did you leave early?

**CRATCHIT**

No, sir.

(Cratchit stands.)

**SCROOGE**

I suppose you'll want all day tomorrow.

**CRATCHIT**

If it's quite convenient. It's only one day a year.

**SCROOGE**

It's a poor excuse for robbing a man, beating him within an inch of his life and leaving him bleeding to death, face down in the mud, while flies pick at his rotting, pus-laden flesh.

**CRATCHIT**

That's disgusting.

(beat)

**SCROOGE**

Be here all the earlier the next morning.

(Exit Cratchit. The office door becomes the door to Scrooge's "bedroom" area. Scrooge gets into bed with his sheep puppet, which he squeezes close to him. Pause, then REGGAE MUSIC starts, building until it's fairly loud.)

Turn that down or I'll call the police.

(The MUSIC gets louder.)

I said turn that down!

(He knocks on his wall, then the floor.)

I'll have you know I own a shotgun!

(Enter MARLEY'S GHOST, wearing ridiculously long dreadlocks that are his chain. The music becomes background.)

Jacob? Jacob Marley?

**MARLEY**

I thought I was *Bob* Marley.

(sings)

Buffalo soldier, dreadlocked rasta. No?

**SCROOGE**

(points at Marley's hair)

Your . . . uh . . .

**MARLEY**

I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, yard by yard. I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to *you*?

**SCROOGE**

But you're . . . white.

(Marley howls and the REGGAE picks up in volume. Scrooge hides under his blanket. Pause, then the sheep puppet pokes its head out. Marley produces an electric razor. At its BUZZING, the sheep hides.)

**MARLEY**

Your chain was as heavy and as long as this seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it since.

(Scrooge pokes his head out.)

**SCROOGE**

But I get regular haircuts.

(pause)

Jacob, speak comfort to me.

**MARLEY**

I cannot stay.

**SCROOGE**

Maybe you could leave me the razor, just in case.

**MARLEY**

I cannot linger anywhere.

(Marley pulls out a bunch of airline tickets.)

Airline tickets on overbooked flights. I always get bumped. I never get to take off. Airport after airport—

**SCROOGE**

The razor.

**MARLEY**

Mankind was my business.

**SCROOGE**

I said razor, not business.

**MARLEY**

The common welfare was my business: charity, mercy and benevolence were all my business. At this time of year, I suffer most. The endless check-in lines, dogs sniffing my bags, everything snowed in and delayed.

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!