

# Call Me Mr. Scrooge



**Murray J. Rivette**

Inspired by the classic tale by Charles Dickens

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P.O. Box 1401  
Rapid City, SD 57709**

# Call Me Mr. Scrooge

## The Craziest Christmas Carol of All

**FARCE/SPOOF.** Inspired by the classic tale by Charles Dickens. Ebenezer Scrooge is visited on Christmas Eve by four ghosts who try to convince him to change his miserly ways by giving his poor clerk, Bob Cratchit, a raise, a light over his desk, and his own key to the men's room. The Ghost of Christmas Past arrives and ends up in therapy after recalling her unhappy Christmas memories. The Ghost of Christmas Present tries to remind Scrooge of the importance of Christmas but has memory issues and can't remember anything in the present. The Ghost of Christmas Future tries to show Scrooge his future with her crystal ball, but it has poor reception and its batteries are running low. Finally convinced he should make nice, Scrooge discovers Bob Cratchit has been embezzling money for years to pay for Tiny Tim's nose job. A hysterical holiday show to remember!

**Performance Time:** Approximately 45-60 minutes.



Charles Dickens, 1842

## About the Story

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) wrote *A Christmas Carol* in just six weeks, and it has remained his most popular work. After suffering from hardship and poverty as a boy, Dickens sympathized with the plight of the poor and felt strongly that social reform was needed to eradicate social inequity. The Cratchit children are thought to correspond to Dickens' own children, and Tiny Tim is believed to be modeled after Dickens's son, Tiny Fred.

## Characters

(4 M, 3 F, 4 flexible)

(With doubling: 3 M, 3 F, 1 flexible)

**EBENEZER SCROOGE:** Miserly widower who thinks Christmas is a bummer; wears a black coattail jacket, an off-white shirt with dark bowtie, black pants, pince-nez glasses, and black shoes and socks; male.

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Scrooge's nephew and employee; wears a brown coattail jacket, off-white shirt with a dark tie, brown pants, glasses, and brown shoes and socks; male.

**STAGE MANAGER:** Marks time by banging a gong; wears a black shirt, pants and shoes; flexible.

**JACOB MARLEY:** Scrooge's former business partner; a ghost who has to carry around a long heavy chain; wears a tattered dark gray or black suit, shirt, and shoes; male.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Ghost who ends up in therapy after recalling her unhappy Christmas memories; wears an old granny dress and has her hair in a large bun with a large tortoise-shell comb in it; female.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** Ghost who tries to remind Scrooge of the importance of Christmas but has memory issues and can't remember anything in the present; wears a dark coat, harlequin glasses with a chain, partially rolled down knee-high stockings, and gold platform shoes; her hair is in rollers and there is a kerchief on her head, female.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE:** Ghost who tries to show Scrooge his future with her crystal ball, but it has poor reception and its batteries are running low; wears a sporty sweat suit with sneakers and sunglasses on top of her head; short in stature and can be played by a kid, if desired; female.

**TINY TIM:** Bob Cratchit's surfing teen son; wears colorful jams, a cutoff sweatshirt, and sunglasses; male.

**CAROLER 1:** Wears winter attire; sings carols; flexible.

**CAROLOER 2, 3:** Wear winter attire; nonspeaking but sing carols; flexible.

**Note:** For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

## Options for Doubling

**CAROLER 1/GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST** (flexible)

**CAROLER 2/GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT** (flexible)

**CAROLER 3/GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE** (flexible)

**JACOB MARLEY/TINY TIM** (male) [*Note: A young actor wearing stage makeup/fat suit to make him look like the much older Marley.*]

## Setting

Scrooge's office and home, Christmas Eve.

## Sets

**Scrooge's office.** There is a stool at a small table or writing desk with a candle on it. The desk is piled high with papers. There is a hook to hang Bob Cratchit's overcoat, muffler, gloves, and hat on.

**Scrooge's bedroom.** A sparsely furnished room with a couch, a table, and a chair. There is a blanket at the foot of the couch.

## Synopsis of Scenes

**Scene 1:** Scrooge's office, Christmas Eve.

**Scene 2:** Street outside Scrooge's office, a short time later.

**Scene 3:** Scrooge's bedroom, a short time later.

**Scene 4:** Scrooge's office, Christmas Day.

## Props

Large quill pen	Plaid shawl, for Scrooge
Papers	Blanket
Pencils	Music books, for Carolers
Candle	Long chain (able to stretch across the entire stage with an extra four feet)
Overcoat, hat, galoshes, long muffler, and gloves, for Cratchit	Roll of toilet paper
Music stand	Banana
Sheet music	Crystal ball (shake-up the snow variety)
Gong	Tin cup with pencils
Hammer	Shopping bag
Handkerchief	Sheet of paper
Pocket watch, for Scrooge	Small surfboard or boogie board
Oversized book entitled, "Mushrooms for Fun and Profit"	

## Special Effects

Green lighting  
Chain rattling, opt.  
Knock at the door  
Fake snow

**“Why, when I was a kid,  
we didn’t have candles.  
We had to rub our hands together  
until our fingers  
burst into flames!”**

—Scrooge

## Scene 1

(AT RISE: Scrooge's office, Christmas Eve. Almost bare stage. There are two masking flats. There is a stool at a small table or writing desk with a lit candle on it. Hanging on one flat is a man's overcoat and muffler with his gloves and hat. On the floor is a pair of galoshes. Bob Cratchit is busily working at his desk, which is piled with papers. Stage Manager enters with music stand, sheet music, gong, and hammer. Stage Manager sets down the stand, places sheet music on the stand, and hits the gong five times. Note: During the following, the Stage Manager puts the gong down, turns a page, and picks up the gong again.)

CRATCHIT: (Sadly.) Oh, dear, it's only five o'clock. It's Christmas Eve, and I'll never get out of here tonight. Darn, darn, darn! (Stage Manager hits the gong once and exits with the props.) Oh, goody! It's six o'clock! (Looking to heavens.) Thank you, thank you, thank you! (Arranges his papers neatly in a pile and puts away his pencils. He dusts the table with a handkerchief and starts to put on his coat, galoshes, muffler, hat, gloves. Crossing to the door, calls.) Goodnight, Uncle Ebenezer. It's Christmas Eve, and I'm on my way home. Have a *very* merry Christmas, sir!

(Scrooge enters, hurriedly.)

SCROOGE: What's this? Christmas? Christmas? Bah! Humbug! And what the heck is this Christmas Eve claptrap? Get back to work, Cratchit, you lazy loafer! (Checks his pocket watch.) Hey, hey, hey, look! It's not even nine o'clock yet! You have at least three more hours before you can punch out and go home. And *don't* call me "uncle" here in the office. I don't want anyone to know that we're related. Keep it quiet, you hear? Call me...Mister Scrooge.

CRATCHIT: (Sighs.) Yes, Unc— (Realizes.) Sir! Mister Scrooge, sir! (Starts to remove his coat, gloves, muffler, etc.)

SCROOGE: And just what gave you the idea that you could leave here at six o'clock in the afternoon?

CRATCHIT: *(Still taking off outerwear.)* Well, sir...you see...uh...it's just that...it's...

SCROOGE: Oh, for goodness sake, spit it out, man! Spit it out!

CRATCHIT: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Well, you see, sir, it's Christmas Eve, sir, and I'd like to spend the evening with my family decorating our tree, sir. Family tradition and all that, you know...Mr. Scrooge, *sir!*

SCROOGE: *(Sarcastically.)* Oh, you would, would you? Decorate your tree, eh? Oh, isn't that just so sweet! *(Nastily.)* Well, you can't leave yet! There's too much work to do! If you want to earn your keep around here, Bobbie-boy, you've got to puttin' in at least 15 hours a day! Those are our *normal* workday hours. Do you realize that your work has been slipping lately?

CRATCHIT: *(Hanging up his coat.)* My work...*slipping*, sir?

SCROOGE: Yes, *slipping!* You're falling behind on all your accounts. You lost 10 minutes work last week when you were late one morning.

CRATCHIT: But, sir, I put in almost two hours of overtime the night before. I was here until nearly 11 o'clock that night.

SCROOGE: Oh, sure, make excuses! Bah! And you've been burning your candle in full daylight, too. See, here... *(Picks up the candle.)* ...you've had this candle for only three weeks, and it's almost half gone already. Why, when I was a kid, we didn't have candles. We had to rub our hands together until our fingers burst into flames! That's the only light we had to work by, Mr. Wax Waster! And we had to work fast, before we got third-degree burns! We were really poor in those days. Trouble is...you kids got things too easy; you're too soft nowadays. You're spoiled and pampered! Candles! Bah! *(Puts the candle back.)*

CRATCHIT: But, Uncle... *(Realizes.)* ...Mr. Scrooge, it's after six o'clock. And Daylight Saving Time is over. It gets pretty dark in here.

SCROOGE: Dark, shmark! What's the big rush to get out of the office? Afraid you might miss a ["Bachelorette"] rerun or something? Quitting time is nine o'clock in the "P" and the "M" around here, mister! *[Or insert another TV show.]*

CRATCHIT: But, sir, my dear wife, Blanche, and I are bringing our beloved son, Tim, home from the hospital tonight. He had an operation, you know. And now that he's all...well, I thought—

SCROOGE: You are not paid to think here! This is not I-B-M! You are paid to work! *Work*, do you understand?! Time flies! We've got to move onward and upward, Bobby-boy!

CRATCHIT: Sir, please don't call me "Bobby-boy."

SCROOGE: Oh, don't be so touchy. You've got to learn to take it. Nobody said that life was going to be easy. And Christmas is a humbug. It is much too commercialized—screaming kids with runny noses and cheap toys made in Korea or Taiwan with nice sharp edges just to cut the little punks. "Deck the Halls" blasting out of every single store in the mall at 2,000 decibels...so loud that your fillings rattle in your teeth. Makes me sick to my stomach!

CRATCHIT: But it's the Christmas spirit, sir.

SCROOGE: Christmas spirit, bah! Nothing but a bunch of freeloaders out to grab everything in sight! Who needs it?!

CRATCHIT: But, sir...please, sir...pretty please, sir?

SCROOGE: Oh, stop your groveling, for Pete's sake! I hate groveling! *(Slight pause.)* Oh, all right, go ahead...get out of here. Go home to your silly old Christmas tree.

CRATCHIT: Oh, thank you, sir. *(Starts to put on his outerwear again.)* And may God bless you, sir. God bless you. God bless you.

SCROOGE: And stop that silly sniveling!

CRATCHIT: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. No sniveling, no groveling...whatever you say, sir.

SCROOGE: I cannot stand groveling and sniveling! I do not for the life of me understand all this fuss over Christmas! It's a bunch of baloney, if you ask me. It's a humbug. It's a

bummer! If you worked hard, you wouldn't need Christmas...you'd only need yourself! Just look at me. I'm a self-made man. Why, when I was only eight years old, I sold matches to passersby on the street. When I was only 12, I shined shoes on the corner. And if someone didn't have shoes, I shined their feet! When I was 14, I sold newspapers out of doorways. At the age of 16, I worked in a coalmine, digging and scraping for little bits and pieces of black coal with my bare hands. True, I hoped to find diamonds, but no such luck. And when I was 18, I dug ditches. For years and years, I sweated and worked my fingers to the bone, and I clawed my way up the ladder. And then, when I was 21, my father finally dropped dead and left me this business! I thought he'd never go. I even considered stepping on the old man's oxygen hose. But shortly after my father died, I lost my first wife. That was quite a blow.

CRATCHIT: Gee, I didn't know that, sir. Mom never told me about that. I'm so sorry. What happened to your first wife, if I may ask?

SCROOGE: She ate something that didn't agree with her...some bad mushrooms, I think. But months later, I remarried and I was content for over a year. Then, my second wife passed on, too.

CRATCHIT: That's a shame. What happened to her?

SCROOGE: Same thing. It seems that she got hold of some bad mushrooms, too. And then there was my third wife—

CRATCHIT: Oh, I'm so glad for you. Things do have a way of working out.

SCROOGE: But she died, too.

CRATCHIT: Oh, that's terrible! What did *she* die of?

SCROOGE: Fractured skull.

CRATCHIT: How did that happen?

SCROOGE: She wouldn't eat the mushrooms. *(To audience, aside.)* Hey, it's an old joke, but it works here. Look, Cratchit, if you're going, you'd better get out of here right now before I change my mind.

CRATCHIT: Yes, sir. *(Starts to exit.)*

SCROOGE: *(Calls.)* And, Cratchit...

CRATCHIT: *(Annoyed.)* Oh, no! *(Starts to take off his coat again. To himself, mumbling.)* I knew it was too good to be true, I just knew it!

SCROOGE: No, no, no! *(Cratchit stops.)* I just wanted to say that I want you to be here on time tomorrow morning. Six o'clock sharp.

CRATCHIT: But, sir...tomorrow? Tomorrow is Christmas Day. It's a holiday.

SCROOGE: *(Shouts.)* A holiday?! Since when did you become union? You're scab labor, and don't you forget it! Tomorrow! Do you understand, Cratchit? And you'll be here on time! Do you hear me, Mr. Teamster union man?

That's hashtag get\_here\_early\_or\_else! And I mean on time!

CRATCHIT: *(Completely cowed by the yelling.)* Yes, sir. I understand. Six o'clock. *(Starts to exit, mumbling.)* What a chicken outfit this is!

SCROOGE: *(Shouts.)* Cratchit!

CRATCHIT: *(Shouts.)* What?! *(Normal voice.)* I mean, yes, sir. What is it, sir?

SCROOGE: Blow out your candle, Bobby-boy. *(Exits.)*

CRATCHIT: *(Mockingly.)* "Blow out your candle, Bobby-boy. Blow out your candle—!" Aaaaaargh! *(To himself.)* Why do I put up with that man? He doesn't care that I'm even alive. There isn't one thing I do that ever pleases him, but I'll do my best to survive his miserable ways. I've got to look after my family. I love being home with my wife, but if my Uncle has his way, I'll be stuck here in this dead-end job for the rest of my life. All my work seems to come out wrong. I'm so frustrated, I could just cry. I work my fingers to the bone, but he'd be happy if I were dead. How much more of this treatment must I endure? My uncle doesn't have a clue. I wish that I could get through to him. I'm angry, but there's nothing I can do about it. *(Crosses to his desk. To himself, mumbling.)* Why do I put up with this? He is my uncle, but I

shouldn't have to take treatment like this from anybody.  
(*Gets an idea.*) I should un-friend him on Facebook! That's  
what I should do!

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**