

Son of “A CHRISTMAS CAROL”

By Frank V. Priore

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STORY OF THE PLAY

There's Son of Frankenstein, Son of Dracula, Son of King Kong, and now, the ultimate sequel - Son of "A Christmas Carol." Old Scrooge is at it again: humbugging Christmas, keeping poor Cratchit under thumb, and ruthlessly destroying his business competition. Only, this time, it's not Ebenezer Scrooge, but his great-grandson, Engelbert Scrooge, and instead of a counting house in merry old England, the scene is the headquarters of Scrooge Enterprises in downtown Manhattan where Cratchit (great-grandson of another of the principals in the Dickens' classic) slaves away under the watchful eye of Scrooge.

It's a hilarious situation that Dickens couldn't possibly have foreseen when he endeavored to unleash Scrooge and company on an unsuspecting world.

TIME: The present, two days before Christmas.

PLACE: The offices of SCROOGE ENTERPRISES in Manhattan.

PLAYING TIME: Approximately 30 minutes.

PRODUCTION HINTS

An effective entrance by Ghost of Christmas Past can be made by utilizing the built-in diversion provided by the "crash" sound effect. Since the audience's attention will be directed SR at that point (be sure to place speakers SR if a prerecorded sound effect is used), the Ghost of Christmas Past can quickly slip through the unseen opening in the SL wall and be in position (leaning against the "Storeroom door") before the audience's attention is once more focused on the entire set. She will seem to just "appear" in the office. One beat after the start of the "crash" sound effect would be the best time for this entrance.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 3 w, 3 children, 1 voice)

SCROOGE

CRATCHIT

CHRISTMAS CAROLERS: Three children.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: A lady.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Another.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME: Another.

OFFSTAGE VOICE: Female.

PROPERTIES

On-stage - Small bag of laundry (under Scrooge's desk); box of cigars, glasses (inside Scrooge's desk); "Scrooge Enterprises/Cratchit Enterprises" sign.

Scrooge - Roll of lifesavers.

Christmas Past - Pocket watch.

Christmas Present - Digital wristwatch.

Christmas Carolers - Book of Christmas Carols for each.

Cratchit - three slips of paper.

COSTUMES

Costuming is contemporary, except for the Ghost of Christmas Past's "ghostly robe." Her robe should be white, if possible. The Christmas Carolers are dressed in choir robes.

SOUND EFFECTS - Telephone, crash of breaking glass, splintering wood.

SETTING

USC there is the large desk of E. Scrooge IV, president of the company. It has a few scattered papers on it and a telephone on the DR corner. On the DL corner are two nameplates, one says: E. Scrooge IV, the other: President. Above the desk on the UPS wall is suspended a sign that reads: SCROOGE ENTERPRISES. (Backside of it reads "CRATCHIT ENTERPRISES.")

DSL is the small desk of Cratchit, Scrooge's auditor. There are larger stacks of paper on it, and it also has two nameplates. One says: R. Cratchit, the other: Auditor and Go-fer (third class). Both desks have a chair behind them. In addition, Scrooge's desk has a chair to the right of it. Along the right wall is a door leading to the office of Scrooge's secretary, Miss Biggle, and the general reception area for the business (off). There is a plush armchair in the DSR and a coat rack USR. Through a window along the UPS wall, SL of CS, can be seen a drop with a panorama of skyscrapers. There is a projection DS along the SL wall on which is painted a door labeled "Storeroom" which faces the inside. There is an opening in the SL wall that is unseen from the audience. This opening will allow the Ghost of Christmas Past to enter unobserved by the audience. Suspended catty-corner across the USR corner is a cardboard holiday greeting, the type normally sold in stores. It consists of individual letters in red, surrounded by holly-like greenery, tacked together, and designed to be hung scallop style from the ceiling. However, instead of spelling out "Merry Christmas," this sign spells out "Bah Humbug!"

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(AT RISE: SCROOGE and CRATCHIT are sitting at their desks. Scrooge is a middle-aged man dressed in an expensive and stylish business suit. Cratchit, a younger man, is also dressed in a business suit, but one that is much less expensive. After a few seconds the PHONE RINGS. NOTE: Allow ample time for audience reaction to the "Bah Humbug!" sign sight gag before ringing phone.)

SCROOGE: *(Picks up the phone.)* Scrooge here. *(Pause.)* Put him on. Well? ... I don't know if it is a good morning, Beadsly; I won't know until I get your report. *(Several seconds pass as SCROOGE listens to Beadsly's report. He begins to frown as he listens.)* You see - it isn't a good morning after all; a report like that makes it a rotten morning! *(SCROOGE'S voice turns harsh.)* Now, why haven't you put your competition out of business yet? ... He's underselling you? ... Well, cut your prices 50%, you blithering idiot; that should force him out of business ... No, you're wrong, Beadsly; you can still show a profit - all you have to do is cut everybody's salary 50% - starting with yours! *(HE slams down the phone. It immediately RINGS again. He picks it up again; annoyed.)* Yes, what is it now? ... The March of Dimes is here asking for a donation? *(HE sighs.)* I suppose they expect a whole dime from me. Don't they ever have a March of Pennies? ... All right, all right, give it to them - but get a receipt!

(HE hangs up the phone. CRATCHIT clears his throat in an effort to get Scrooge's attention. There is no response from Scrooge. Cratchit clears his throat again, this time much louder. Looks up from his desk.)

SCROOGE: *(Cont'd.)* Is that throat clearing directed at me, Cratchit, or are you merely choking on your lunch?

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(CRATCHIT opens his mouth to speak, but before he can say a word, SCROOGE cuts him off.)

SCROOGE: *(Cont'd.)* And for your sake, I sincerely hope it wasn't the latter, because since it's now nine o'clock and your lunch break isn't until noon, I'll fire you for eating on the job.

CRATCHIT: Er, actually, sir, I was trying to get your attention. I thought that while you were on the subject of donating money, I might -

SCROOGE: I'm never on the subject of donating money, Cratchit. It's a filthy habit, and I deplore it. Now, what's on your mind? *(CRATCHIT hesitates.)* Speak up man, or I'll dock you for the time you've wasted.

CRATCHIT: Er, why don't we forget it, sir.

SCROOGE: *(Rises, moves to CRATCHIT'S desk.)* Nonsense. You had something to say to me, so out with it. Or, are you as spineless as the rest of my employees?

CRATCHIT: Well, sir, my co-workers and I were wondering if you'd care to contribute to our Christmas party fund?

SCROOGE: Christmas party? I don't recall authorizing any Christmas party.

CRATCHIT: I, er ... seems that we were planning to get together and have a little holiday celebration ...

SCROOGE: On company time, no doubt?

CRATCHIT: I imagine we could squeeze it in during our coffee break, if necessary.

SCROOGE: On company premises, I suppose?

CRATCHIT: Well, yes, sir. I didn't think you'd mind. Besides, it's extremely difficult to rent a hall on short notice, and for a ten minute coffee break, it would hardly be ...

SCROOGE: Out of the question. *(HE turns, moves back to his desk, and sits. After a few seconds, CRATCHIT clears his throat once again.)* You really ought to have that taken care of - on your own time, of course.

CRATCHIT: Actually, sir, I was wondering ...

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SCROOGE: You're always wondering, Cratchit. That's your problem. If you expect to retain your position with this firm, I'd suggest you spend less time wondering and more time working.

CRATCHIT: Sir, was it the Christmas party or your contribution to it that was out of the question?

SCROOGE: Both. I can't have my employees cavorting through the corridors of this establishment. Think of what would happen to my insurance rates if one of you should drown while you're bobbing for apples. *(The PHONE RINGS once again, SCROOGE, annoyed, picks it up.)* Yes ... Christmas Carolers? ... Have you taken leave of your senses, Miss Biggle? Surely, you don't think that for one moment I would sanction the invasion of my office by a pack of screaming street urchins, do you? ... I don't care how big their mother is. Let those brats sing for their supper elsewhere! *(HE slams down the phone.)*

VOICE OF THE CHILDREN'S MOTHER: *(Offstage.)* In you go, darlings. Make nice music for the stingy old man.

(The three CHILDREN enter. They are wearing choir robes, and carrying small books of Christmas carols. The last to come into the office closes the door behind him/her. They line up to the right of Scrooge's desk, and begin singing.)

CHILDREN: *(Sing.)*

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

(On "year" the right hand of each CHILD shoots out, palm up.)

SCROOGE: *(Rises; to CRATCHIT.)* Something tells me these kids have a great future ahead of them - in politics.

End of Freeview

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