



Scrooge, The Panto

by Dave Crump

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Characters:

Scrooge –	He is a cantankerous old miser. But he realises the error of his ways and eventually becomes generosity itself. Male.
Bob Cratchett	Audience participation character, he thinks his children are angels when in fact they are all devils – Male or female, fairly young (younger than the actors playing his children). He/She must be able to communicate well with the audience.
Jemima Fezziwig –	Dame – The widow of Scrooge's former employer now down on her luck, she runs a wig shop and is a long way behind on her rent. Male.
Sarah Fezziwig –	Jemima Fezziwig's daughter – Principal girl. She falls in love with Fred much to Scrooge's annoyance. Female.
Fred –	Scrooge's Nephew. Panto Principal Boy. He is in love with Sarah – much to Scrooge's dismay as he realises the two families could become one – Female.
Young Scrooge –	As a teenager. Completely the opposite of his older self. He is happy and cheerful and thoroughly enjoys a good party.
Tiny Tim –	Cratchett's son – he is very tall and as healthy as can be yet his mother acts as if he's ill – Male.
Andrea Cratchett –	Comedy trio – female – Could be male (Andrew)
Georgia Cratchett –	Comedy trio – female – could be male (George)
Pancake Cratchett –	Comedy trio – male – All three Cratchett children are played by middle-aged adults. They could be any mix of male and female (although the names will have to change) as long as they can work together as a comedy trio and act like ten year olds!
Mr Hard –	The Bailiff's Men – Comedy double act. Hard is the straightman of the double act, he acts the tough guy but is in fact like all bullies a coward and not very bright.
Mr Easy –	The Bailiff's Men – Comedy double act. Easy is slightly effeminate and is an unlikely bailiff, he is a complete idiot as oppose to Hard who is only slightly daft.

Jacob Marley – Evil Spirit. Marley is cast as the villain of the panto. He is the immortal who, as is tradition, does not stray too far from down stage left. He is a nasty miser like Scrooge and is here to ensure Scrooge is forever condemned to Hell just like he was. He is all white and wrapped in a mighty chain.

Ghost of Christmas – Good Spirit – She is the ghost of Christmas's past present and future and is a lovable character who has to generate a warm reaction from the audience. She should be played for laughs.

Mrs Cratchett – Bob's wife. A woman at her wits end. She can be played as a timid mouse or a battleaxe.

Lord Mayor – A smaller part for an older actor. Some lines in various crowd scenes.

Lady Mayoress – A lady of grace and elegance who looks down on the poor.

Mr Fezziwig – Scrooge's former employer only seen in Christmas past. Should be a jolly older man.

Mrs Jellybubble – A customer in the wig shop.

Boy – Could be a juvenile actor or another adult playing a child. A cheery cockney sparrow.

Scenes

Act 1

- Scene 1: London Street – cloth
- Scene 2: The Immortals
- Scene 3: London Street
- Scene 4: Scrooge's Counting House – permanent set
- Scene 5: Fezziwig's Wig Shop – cloth
- Scene 6: London Street

Act 2

- Scene 1: The Prologue
- Scene 2: Scrooge's Counting House
- Scene 3: On the way to Bob's House – tabs
- Scene 4: Bob Cratchett's House – box set
- Scene 5: Fred's House – cloth
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PantoScripts Perusal

Act 1

Scene 1:

London Street

(The scene is a Dickensian London street, shop windows, and doorways. It is winter and there is snow on the ground. Christmas shoppers carry turkeys and presents. Various street traders are selling their wares – hot chestnuts, mistletoe, etc. A blind beggar sits upstage. Lord and Lady Mayoress are mingling with the crowd.)

SONG 1: OPENING NUMBER

(Bob Cratchett enters s.l. he is carrying a huge pile of presents.)

Lord Mayor: Ah, Bob Cratchett – been Christmas shopping?

Bob: Nothing gets past you does it Mr Mayor.

Lord Mayor: Although, leaving it all till Christmas Eve – tut tut.

Bob: Mr Scrooge hasn't given me a day off for eight years, apart from Christmas day of course, so today's the only day I could do it.

Lady Mayoress: Well – nice of him to let you have Christmas Eve off this year?

Bob: Actually, he didn't – but he's out collecting debts, so I've nipped out for an hour before he gets back.

Lord Mayor: I dare say you've spoilt the kiddies?

Bob: I've spent my last farthing. I've got a dolls house for the girls and a spinning top for my eldest lad. And a teddy for Tiny Tim – he's the youngest.

Lady Mayoress: What are your other children called?

Bob: Well the girls are called Andrea cause she was born on St Andrew's day and Georgia cause she was born on St George's day. *(if the children are all boys just change to George and Andrew!)*

Lord Mayor: And what did you call the lad?

Bob: Pancake.

Lady Mayoress: How.....unusual.

Lord Mayor: Merry Christmas then Cratchett, don't let old Scrooge catch you away from your desk. *(they exit)*

Bob: *(Noticing the audience)* Hello – what are you lot doing here? Are you Christmas shopping as well? Isn't it exciting! Mind you I can't afford much, I work for Mr Scrooge and he's a terrible miser. He doesn't like Christmas – I do though, do you? We're so poor most people won't even talk to us. I wonder – would you talk to me? Great – in that case when I come on you shout 'Hello Bob' and I won't feel so lonely. Can we try it?

(Bob proceeds to run on a few times, each time getting the audience to shout 'Hello Bob' louder and louder. Eventually the Bailiff's men enter. Mr Easy has a slight limp and is carrying a sack full of their ill-gotten gains, Mr Hard has a black eye.)

Bob: Oh no, it's the Bailiff's men. They've after me for the rent, *(he tries to hide behind the presents)*.

Hard: Well well, if it isn't Bob Scrachett.

Easy: Who is it then?

Bob: Who are you – what do you want?

Hard: Now Scratchett you know who we are – we're the bailiff's men. I'm Hard.

Easy: And I'm Easy.

Hard: And you're behind with your rent.

Bob: Well, Mr Scrooge doesn't pay me much, and when I asked him for a loan he refused.

Hard: A man after our own heart.

Bob: Mr Scrooge did promise to have a word with my landlord, your boss, to see if I could pay next month instead.

Hard: Oh dear, Oh dear, Oh dear.

Easy: Oh dear

Hard: I do the Oh dears.

Bob: I've no money you see. Mr Scrooge only pays me one halfpenny a month.

Hard: Well now – we can do this the Hard way.

Easy: Or the Easy way.

Bob: I'll take the Easy way.

Easy: Well, I ask you nicely and you pay up.

Bob: What's the hard way?

(They look blankly at each other and scratch their heads.)

Hard: No one's ever asked for the hard way.

Bob: Well either way – I've no money.

Easy: What's all these presents then?

Bob: It's Christmas.

Hard: Our favourite time to be collecting debts – isn't Mr Easy

Easy: Oh yes Mr Hard.

Hard: *(He takes the presents of Bob)* There we go.

(Easy takes the last one and gives it a squeeze)

Easy: Ooh, what's this one?

Bob: It's a jumper for my wife.

Hard: Pure wool I hope.

Bob: Yes – Did you know it takes three sheep to make a sweater?

Easy: I didn't even know they could knit.

Hard: We'll put this towards what you owe.

Bob: Oh please don't take them, we're so poor. We can't even afford a Christmas turkey.

Easy: What are you having for Christmas dinner then?

Bob: A sausage with a feather in it.

Easy: Ooh, sausage!

(Scrooge enters carrying a bag of gold.)

Scrooge: Not bad for a mornings work. *(He notices Bob)* Cratchett – what are you doing here – why aren't you at your desk?

Bob: Oh Mr Scrooge! I just came outside to warm up a bit sir – its freezing in the office.

Scrooge: Nonsense, I put a fresh lump of coal on that fire only last Easter.

Bob: Mr Scrooge, did you have a chance to talk to my landlord about letting me off my rent this month?

Scrooge: Yes and I'm delighted to say he has agreed to alter the amount.

Bob: Really?

Scrooge: Yes, he's doubled it.

Bob: What!

Scrooge: Now get back to work – and I'll be docking you one hours wages for your trouble.

Bob: Yes sir.

Scrooge: Oh and here – take this bag of gold and look after it till I get back.

(Bob exits dejectedly.)

Scrooge: *(To bailiffs)* You two – come here.

Easy: We're busy.

Hard: Yeh, we've got the orphans picnic to collect from next.

Scrooge: A worthy cause – how much do they owe you?

Easy: Three sandwiches and half a battenburg.

Hard: And they're getting behind on their Eccles cakes too.

Scrooge: *(To Hard)* How did you get that black eye?

Hard: I coughed.

Scrooge: What do you mean you coughed?

Hard: I was in my next door neighbours wardrobe at the time.

Scrooge: And you. *(To Easy)* Why the limp?

Easy: I hurt myself raking up leaves.

Hard: How?

Easy: I fell out of the tree.

Scrooge: Now look, I've just been to see your boss about Cratchett's rent. And we've come to an arrangement – I now own Cratchett's house, and all the others in this little black book of yours (*He snatches the book from Mr Hard*).

Hard: So it was you who doubled Scratchett's rent?

Scrooge: Well Crachett was being charged a pittance. Listen, I need a couple of good debt collectors. How much was your boss paying you?

Hard: He said he'd pay us what we were worth.

Easy: So far we owe him fifty quid.

Scrooge: So he was paying you nothing?

Hard: That's correct.

Scrooge: I'll double it.

Hard/Easy: We'll take it.

Scrooge: (*Flicking through book*) Right, first thing in the morning, get over to Old Mrs Shingles – she's got her grandchildren over for Christmas – make sure they put their pocket money towards this months rent will you?

Hard/Easy: Right Oh Mr Scrooge.

Scrooge: And I'll have your takings for this morning. (*They give him their bag of gold*) Excellent.

Easy: Oh it's lovely to be working with you...

Hard: Could we have an advance on our wages Mr Scrooge?

Easy: Ten pounds ought to do it.

Scrooge: Ten pounds! Five pounds! What do you want three pounds for?

Easy: (*To Hard*) Ooh he's good isn't he?

Scrooge: Get to work!

(*Hard and Easy begin to exit.*)

Easy: How are we going to get to old Mrs Shingles? She lives miles away.

Hard: We'll hitchhike.

Easy: Well we'd better set off early – we want to avoid the traffic.

Both: Right. Merry Christmas Mr Scrooge (*exit*).

Scrooge: Christmas – Bah Humbug – Just an excuse to stop working for a few hours. (*Shouts off stage*) Crachett!

(*Bob enters*)

Bob: Hello kids!

Audience: Hello Bob!

Bob: Yes sir?

Scrooge: I thought I told you to get back to your desk.

Bob: But I heard you call me back sir.

Scrooge: Then you obviously weren't walking fast enough were you? Here, take this gold and put it with the rest – I'm off to the hospital – I gave blood last week and they've yet to make any repayments.

Bob: Gosh kids, look at all this money – it's rather a lot. What if I get mugged? Or lose it? I know – will you help me look after it? I said will you help me look after it? Great, if I put it over here (*He places the two bags of gold d.s.r*) you can keep an eye on it. Then if anyone goes anywhere near it you can shout for me – do you think you can do that? Shall we try it? You shout Bob Crachett – try it as loud as you can!

Audience: (*As Bob pretends to sneak towards the gold*) Bob Crachett!

Bob: That's great – you won't forget will you? Thanks kids. See you later!

(*Blackout*)

Scene 2:
The Immortals

(Ghost of Christmas appears stage right.)

GoC: Hello boys and girls, do you know who I am? No? Well I'll tell you – I'm the Ghost of Christmas – Christmas Past, Present and Future. I'm a kind of souped up Fairy Godmother. Tonight I'm here to help sort out old Scrooge – have you met him yet? He's a nasty old miser isn't he? Well I'm going to change all that – with your help. Will you help me? Great, with a bit of luck we can get Scrooge to spread some Christmas cheer.

(Ghost of Jacob Marley appears stage left.)

Marley: Ha ha ha, you must be joking. Scrooge? Christmas cheer? Not if I can help it.

GoC: And who are you?

Marley: In life I was Jacob Marley – Scrooge's partner – I made him the man he is today.

GoC: Not something to be proud of. What are you doing here?

Marley: Unfortunately the assistance we gave to the poor, lending them money at extortionate rates, was not appreciated when I died and they sent me straight to hell.

GoC: Serves you right. What's with the big chain?

Marley: It's the chain I forged in life – each link represents an ill deed.

GoC: It sounds like you and Scrooge were made for each other.

Marley: Well now old Scrooge's time is nearly up.

GoC: So you've come to help me mend his ways before it's too late?

Marley: You must be joking – I'm here to make sure that Scrooge doesn't get a last minute change of heart and stays a horrible miser.

GoC: But why?

Marley: Because I want to be sure he will join me when his time comes. I'm not the only one who's going to suffer for our miserly deeds. And it shouldn't be difficult, his chain was as long as this seven years ago, it is monstrous now.

GoC: But the boys and girls are going to help me, by the time we've finished with Scrooge he'll be going straight to heaven.

Marley: What these useless lumps? They'll be no use – look at them. All just had loads of Christmas presents and I bet not one of them shared them with their friends never mind gave any to the poor. They're much more like Scrooge than you think. I'm sure you'll all be on my side wont you?

Audience: No!

Marley: Oh yes you will.

Audience: Oh no we won't, etc. etc.

GoC: There you are – they know it's important to be nice – Christmas is all about sharing and caring.

Marley: No it's about taking and keeping – lovely!

GoC: Its too late for you, but Scrooge can change you'll see.

Marley: No chance. And when his time comes we'll spend eternity together – haunting all these little children. Teaching them not to share, and to take everything for themselves – you'll all soon be like Scrooge and me and I'll be waiting for you when your time is up, ha ha ha, *(exits)*.

GoC: What a horrible ghost! Luckily I know you are not nasty – you're not are you?

Audience: No!

GoC: Good, now time is running out – it's already Christmas Eve – luckily I have a few tricks up my sleeve which should give us time to teach Mr Scrooge a lesson he won't forget! Are you with me?

Audience: Yes!

GoC: Great – See you later.

(Exit)

Scene 3:
London Street

(Lights go back up on London street scene. Londoners are going about their business, Mrs Fezziwig enters she is carrying a large shopping basket, she bumps into Fred who has entered from the opposite side. She drops her shopping.)

Fred: Oh, I do apologise.

Mrs F: *(Staggering to her feet)* You stupid man, why don't you look where you're going? *(sees him)* Oh, I mean no need to worry about a little thing like knocking me over – what a lovely boy.

Fred: Glad you're all right.

Mrs F: *(Swooning into her arms)* Well I am a little light headed.

Fred: Blimey the rest of you must weigh a ton.

Mrs F: Oy! *(Regaining her seductive composure)* You know I like you, and I suppose you're wondering why you know my face?

Fred: Actually I was wondering if I'd ever be able to forget it.

Mrs F: I'm used to it. Every time I walk past a man he sighs.

Fred: With relief I would think.

(Sarah enters. Shoppers continue to mill around.)

Sarah: Mother, leave that man alone. *(Mrs F scowls at her)* I'm so sorry, she's under a lot of pressure.

Passer by: So's her corset.

(Mrs F hits passer by with handbag – as she is distracted Sarah and Fred's eyes meet.)

Fred: *(Instantly smitten)* No trouble at all, it was all my fault. Is there any way I can make it up to you and your mother?

Mrs F: Well I can think of a few things.

Sarah: Sorry but we're in a hurry.

Mrs F: Spoilsport.

Fred: Where are you going? Can I walk with you?

Sarah: Well actually it's a bit embarrassing.

Mrs F: I'm not easily embarrassed.

Fred: That's what I thought when I saw that dress.

Mrs F: Oh it's lovely isn't it – three pound fifty from Matalan – its real nylon you know.

Fred: You were saying?

Sarah: Well, Oh sorry – I'm Sarah by the way.

Fred: Fred

Mrs F: No Sarah.

Fred: No I'm Fred.

Sarah: We're on our way to see our new landlord and ask him if he would reduce our rent.

Mrs F: I have a small emporium

Fred: I'm sorry to hear that.

Sarah: We have a small shop and, well no one has any money to buy our goods

Mrs F: They won't even buy our bads.

Fred: So you're finding it hard at the moment.

Mrs F: I often have that affect.

Sarah: No one seems to want wigs anymore, that's our shop you see – Mrs Fezziwig's wig shop in Wimpole Street.

Mrs F: Fezziwig's the name wigs is the game! (*Noticing the audience*) Ooh look at all the boys and girls. Hello – who let you lot out? There are some hunks out there – all those muscles and moustaches and the men are nice as well. Would you like some sweeties? Yes? Well you can't have 'em.

Sarah: Mother – don't be so mean.

Mrs F: Well food is expensive I paid nearly 1.80 for my lunch, and it wasn't even a double.

Fred: Talking of food – can you smell curry?

Mrs F: Oh that'll be my make up – it's chicken tikka mascara.

Sarah: Come on mom, will you help give them out Fred?

Fred: Of course.

(They throw out some sweets. Fred and Sarah then are transfixed by each other as the next section of dialogues continues.)

Mrs F: Well I hope you enjoy them, Ere what's this bag someone's left here?
(goes towards gold – audience shout for Bob) All right no need to shout. To think some of you lot come from Sutton Coldfield and behave like that – you're as common as muck

(Bob enters and gets between the gold and Mrs F)

Bob: Excuse me sir *(Look of horror from Mrs F)* sorry madam.

Mrs F: It's Miss *(look of surprise from Bob)* I'm a widow. *(Grabs Fred's arm – slowly and seductively)* widow.

Bob: Either way just keep away from the bag please.

Fred: *(Struggling free from her grasp)* She just keeps following me.

Bob: Thanks kids *(exits)*

Fred: Sarah, do you think I could see you again?

Sarah: I'd like that.

Mrs F: Oh yes – where shall we all go?

Fred: I meant just me and ...never mind, I'd better go. *(Fred exits.)*

Sarah: You scared him off mother.

Mrs F: Nonsense, you should always leave them wanting less

Sarah: Why is it so hard to find a man who is sensitive, caring and good looking?

Mrs F: Those men have already got boyfriends dear. Now come on *(exits)*.

Sarah: I'll catch you up. *(To herself)* I've got a feeling that that's the man for me.

SONG 2 – Sarah

(Tabs close during the song to cover scene change. Blackout)

Scene 4:
Scrooge's Counting House

(The scene is a dingy room with two desks – one high where Scrooge can not only work but also look down on the lower desk, which is Bob's. The room is Scrooge's lodgings as well as the office and there is an old bed stage right with curtains around it. Scrooge enters through shop door. Shop bell rings.)

Scrooge: *(Shouting to off stage through door)* I don't care who you are – get them reindeer off my roof!

Bob: Good afternoon Sir.

Scrooge: *(Sitting at his higher chair and opening his ledger)* It might be, if my assistant was working instead of talking. Pass me your ledger.
(There is a silence as they work on the ledgers).

Bob: Yes sir.

Scrooge: *(Examining the ledger)* Your work has improved Cratchett. There are only ten mistakes here – now let's look at the second line shall we?

Bob: I have been trying sir.

Scrooge: Yes very. *(He continues to study the ledger)* Cratchett – here,
(Throwing down the black book) I've recently acquired these ne'er-do-wells – they all owe me money – put them in this week's ledger.

Bob: Of course sir.

Scrooge: And be quick about it – no doubt you'll be skiving off at five o'clock as usual.

Bob: That is home time sir.

Scrooge: Only just – and I suppose you'll want a full day off tomorrow?

Bob: It's Christmas day sir.

Scrooge: Bah, Christmas! Humbug.

Bob: No thank you sir I don't like sweets.

Scrooge: Why should I pay bone-idle staff for a day's work, when they spend it sitting around eating turkey,

Bob: *(Too himself)* Sausage

Scrooge: and drinking wine.

Bob: *(to himself)* Vimto

Scrooge: The whole thing should be banned.

Bob: (*Looking at the book in alarm*) Er, Mr Scrooge? My address is in this book.

(*Fred enters, the shop bell rings*)

Scrooge: Ah, saved by the bell.

Fred: Merry Christmas uncle!

Scrooge: Uncle – Hah, every year he comes here.

Fred: That's right, because every year despite your thoroughly loathsome character and despicable meanness I remember that you remain the only family I have, and in memory of my mother and the fact it's Christmas I invite you to dinner tomorrow at noon.

Scrooge: You mean every year you come here in the hope I'll be dead and have left you some small fortune in my will – well I'm not and I haven't.

Bob: I didn't know you had relatives sir.

Scrooge: My sister's children. A girl Denise and a boy (*indicating Fred*) denephew.

Fred: Fred (*Shakes Bob's hand*)

Scrooge: Get on with your work.

(*Bob scurries back to his desk. Lord Mayor enters*)

Lord Mayor: Ah Scrooge.

Scrooge: What do you want? I'm very busy.

Fred: What a lovely welcome.

Scrooge: I save lovely welcomes for people who are either lovely or welcome – (*To Lord Mayor*) you sir are neither. Now state your business.

Lord Mayor: I was wondering if you would make a contribution to the orphanage.

Scrooge: I've already contributed to the orphanage.

Lord Mayor: Have you?

Scrooge: Yes, why I helped make three new orphans only last week.

Lord Mayor: I mean they've been struggling to make ends meet of late.

Scrooge: And don't I know it – they've failed to pay me what they owe!

Fred: You mean to say you take money from the orphans?

Scrooge: And why not? I lent it to them and if they can't pay me back they will all go to jail.

Lord Mayor: But Scrooge – the orphans wouldn't last a night in jail.

Scrooge: Very good – it will help to reduce the surplus population – now be off with you.

Lord Mayor: Outrageous sir! I shall bid you good day. *(He exits cursing under his breath)*

Scrooge: *(As if he has heard the Mayor curse him)* And you.

Fred: Can I take it we won't be having you for dinner then uncle ?

Scrooge: No, you'll be having turkey like everyone else – goodbye!

Fred: Very well, – Merry Christmas Bob Cratchett.

Bob: Merry Christmas.

(Fred exits.)

Scrooge: Bah, Humbug!

(Hard and Easy enter. Scrooge keeps working on his ledger throughout this dialogue.)

Bob: Blimey it's like New Street *(local)* Station in here today.

Scrooge: You're right – nothing's on time – You should have been here at four o'clock.

Easy: Why what happened?

Hard: Every time I ask him the time he gives me different answer,

Easy: I've spent the last three hours trying to throw away a boomerang.

Scrooge: Cratchett – these are my two new employees – this means you are now third in line for promotion. Yes even behind this bloke *(Indicating Mr Easy)*. Now make me some tea while I fetch my other ledger. I'll deal with you two in a minute.

(Bob and Scrooge both exit.)

Easy: Do you think it'll be a white Christmas?

Hard: It depends on the weather. Why are you only wearing one glove – have you lost one?

Easy: No I've found one.

Hard: You're so stupid.

Easy: I am not – I've been accepted to medical school.

Hard: What are you doing here then?

Easy: They don't want me while I'm still alive.

Hard: Well it don't matter now. Mr Easy – we've finally made it working for a rich man like Scrooge.

Easy: Yes all that lovely money.

Hard: I mean look – he just leaves it lying around! *(Moves towards the bags of gold – audience shout for Bob)*

(Bob enters)

Bob: Thanks kids. I wouldn't touch that if I were you.

Hard: *(Menacingly)* And what are you going to do to stop us?

Easy: Ooh you're so butch.

(Scrooge enters.)

Scrooge: Bailiffs! What's the next address on your list?

Hard: Number 13 Cheapside. Three weeks behind on their rent.

Scrooge: Well get over there and throw them out – and make sure they don't land on anything soft.

Hard: *(To Mr Easy)* Like your head.

(They exit.)

Bob: Number 13 Cheapside – that's my house!

Scrooge: Don't worry Cratchett – I'm sure you'll find another!

(Bob exits at a run, he bumps into Mrs F coming in.)

Mrs F: Once again, men just throwing themselves at me.

Bob: Excuse me.

(Mrs F gives him a quick grope as he slips past her.)

Mrs F: Lovely boy. Bit young for me though.

Scrooge: *(Shouting after him)* Cratchett – my tea! *(noticing Mrs F as if for the first time)* What do you want?

Sarah: It's about our rent.

Scrooge: Who are you?

Mrs F: *(Hands him a card)* Jemima Fezziwig, of Fezziwig's wiggery.

Scrooge: Ah the rug shop. I was an apprentice there in my youth. You must be very old now.

Mrs F: I don't look forty do I?

Scrooge: No but I'm sure you did when you were.

Mrs F: How dare you! How very dare you!

Scrooge: Mrs Fezziwig, your late husband was a good man – and I will do what I can for an old acquaintance.....

Sarah: We were wondering if you could reduce our rent.

Scrooge: Anything at all...*(hardly believing his ears)* Reduce your rent! Why of course dear lady and while I'm at it why don't I lend you another bag of gold to pay for a nice big Christmas party?

Mrs F: Oh well that would be lovely....

Scrooge: What do you take me for? You spend your life minding your own business, never asking for anything off anybody – apart from what they owe you. Then before you know it, every hard up has-been thinks you're a soft touch.

Sarah: Please Mr Scrooge, we're desperate.

Mrs F: Speak for yourself dear.

Scrooge: Now if you don't mind.

Mrs F: *(Aside to Sarah)* Don't worry dear, leave this to mumsy. *(Trying to seduce him)* Oh Ebenezer – With all this money how come you're still a bachelor?

Scrooge: Well I think it's because I never married. Now get out! I never want to see either of you again. *(He bundles them out of the door).*

(Scrooge returns to his desk, he closes his book, and starts to get ready for bed. There is a knock at the door. He opens it – no one is there. He closes it – there is another knock. He opens it again – no one is there.)

Scrooge: What is the meaning of this – tomfoolery?

(He closes the door and Marley has appeared behind it.)

Marley: Scrooge!

Scrooge: Who are you? What is the meaning of this?

Marley: Don't you recognise me? I was your partner Jacob Marley.

Scrooge: *(Staggers back to his bed)* You're dead.

Marley: It's been a long time old friend.

Scrooge: *(Hesitantly)* What do you want?

(Marley sits by the bed.)

Marley: I have returned from the spirit world, and I'm here to give you a warning.

(Marley starts eating nuts from a bowl by Scrooge's bed.)

Scrooge: No such thing as ghosts – you're a figment of my imagination – a figment sir.

Marley: I am no such thing. I have been watching you since I died – you have continued our work well.

(Marley is still eating nuts.)

Scrooge: I must be dreaming – I ate too much tonight – you sir are just my indigestion.

Marley: *(Eating nuts)* Shouldn't have snacks by the bed then.

Scrooge: Help yourself – I don't like nuts.

Marley: Then why are these here?

Scrooge: I don't mind sucking the chocolate off.

Marley: *(Now choking)* What do I have to do to get a glass of water in this place?

Scrooge: Set yourself on fire sir.

Marley: (*Angrily*) Listen you old fool. Believe what I say or I'll set your whole house on fire.

Scrooge: (*Scared – he jumps onto the bed and covers behind the curtain*)
On no! I believe you, I believe you. It's just, well this is all so strange.

Marley: Perhaps I do appear strange to you.

Scrooge: Why do you carry that chain?

Marley: Oh this old thing – it's the latest fashion in the underworld, I mean in heaven.

Scrooge: It looks heavy.

Marley: No – it's as light as a feather.

(*Scrooge pulls the chain – there is a loud flushing sound.*)

Scrooge: What was that?

Marley: A chain reaction – events have begun which cannot be stopped – you will be visited tonight by three other spirits.

Scrooge: Yes a large brandy, a whiskey and possibly a port – this is quite a shock.

Marley: These three spirits will attempt to make you part with your money – to give it away, to fritter it on the poor.

Scrooge: The poor! (*He can hardly get his breath*)

Marley: Oh yes, they'll take every penny – but you mustn't let them. Take it all to your grave with you – just like I did!

Scrooge: Of course – but when will these spirits appear?

Marley: They will visit you on the hour – the first at ten past one. Remember my warning. (*He stands*)

Scrooge: You are leaving? No, don't go Marley old friend – tell me more – why are they coming tonight?

Marley: I must go now – I have a cottage pie in the oven – beware Scrooge, beware.

(*He floats off in a ghostly way.*)

Scrooge: (*Coming to his senses*) Bah humbug – dreaming, that's all – Old Marley – a figment, (*He gets into bed*)

(He gets into bed and draws the curtain. Lights dim on the room, lights up on Marley downstage left.)

Marley: Sleep well Scrooge and take no notice of those with good intentions.

(GoC enters stage right into a spotlight.)

GoC: So you've warned him I would be coming have you?

Marley: Now you've got no chance and my plan is foolproof.

GoC: So even you can understand it.

Marley: Do your worst spirit – you'll never change old Scrooge. He's as good as in hell now.

GoC: We shall see – be off with you.

Marley: Not yet – I've got a bit more moaning, groaning and general haunting to do yet – Ooh my Cottage pie! *(Exits)*

GoC: Well kids – here we go, wish me luck. *(exits stage right)*

(Lights up on the bedroom as we hear the clock strike one. There is a pause and then the door opens with a loud creak. Scrooge's head appears between the curtains – he is now in his nightgown.)

Scrooge: Aagh! Go away! What do you want? Are you the spirit Marley spoke of?

(Scrooge jumps out of bed and grabs a poker to defend himself with. Mr Hard and Mr Easy enter.)

Scrooge: *(Realising its them)* Bah!

Hard: Sorry to bother you so late Mr Scrooge.

Scrooge: What is it?

Easy: A poker I think.

Scrooge: I mean what do you want?

Hard: Well, me and Easy, we were out doing the last of the collecting and the carts really full and well you know its really muddy what with all the snow so we were wondering....

Scrooge: Out with it man!

Easy: We need a push.

Scrooge: Nonsense, get out you fool, get out!

Hard: No need to get upset Mr Scrooge – we only want a push.

Scrooge: It's one o'clock in the morning and its snowing – get out!

(Mr Hard exits looking dejected. The Ghost of Christmas appears upstage in the shadows, alternatively this could be done with an off stage mic – either way Scrooge does not see her at this stage. In one production her face appeared in a painting on the wall (as the portraits do in the library scene in Me and My Girl, with a clever lighting effect) any suitably 'spooky' approach will work)

GoC: Oh Scrooge? Scrooge?

Scrooge: Who's there? Is that you Marley?

GoC: I am your conscience Scrooge – I am here to remind you to do the right thing.

Scrooge: Bah humbug!

GoC: Do as I say Scrooge, or compared to me a visit from Marley's ghost will be like a visit from the Easter bunny.

(She steps back into the wings.)

Scrooge: Oh all right! *(calling off)* Bailiffs!

(Mr Easy enters)

Easy: Yes Mr Scrooge?

Scrooge: Do you still need a push?

Easy: Yes I never have been strong.

Scrooge: Very well – where is Mr Hard?

Easy: Over there – on the swings.

Scrooge: Get out! *(Mr Easy exits quickly nearly tripping over his own feet in the process. Scrooge looks around him).* That's the last time I listen to spirits!

(Scrooge steps forward – tabs close. GoC enters.)

Scrooge: What a lot of nonsense.

GoC: Scrooge?

Scrooge: Now what –Who are you?