

A CHRISTMAS CAROL - excerpt
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WOMAN 1: Poor Roberta Cratchit was the only clerk he had. Many were the times she'd turned away calls from charities, for if there was one thing Scrooge hated more than losing money, it was giving it away.

CRATCHIT: *(On phone)* I will check with Mr. Scrooge. *(comes into his 'office')* Mister Scrooge.

SCROOGE: *(Not looking up)* What is it Cratchit?

CRATCHIT: Cratchit, sir. It's the Salvation Army, Sir.

SCROOGE: Are they recruiting you?

CRATCHIT: Uh, no sir. They are collecting donations to help the homeless during this festive Christmas season. *(Scrooge grunts)* How much should they put down under your name?

SCROOGE: Mmmmmmm.....Nothing.

CRATCHIT: *(confused)* You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone.

CRATCHIT: But - -

SCROOGE: "Festive Christmas Season", humbug. Giving my hard-earned money to the homeless is absurd. What do the homeless need money for? They have no homes to take care of. They pay no rent - or has the city started charging to sleep in the Park?

CRATCHIT: No sir, but they still have to eat.

SCROOGE: Cratchit tell me something. Does this fine state still have shelters?

CRATCHIT: Well, yes Sir, plenty.

SCROOGE: The taxes I pay still fund those shelters?

CRATCHIT: Well, yes Sir.

SCROOGE: Then there's your answer. The homeless must go there.

CRATCHIT: But Sir, those shelters are horrible - some would rather die!

SCROOGE: Then they best get on to doing it and make more room for the rest of us.

CRATCHIT: But, Sir -

SCROOGE: That reminds me. Did you send out those eviction notices?

CRATCHIT: Eviction notices? But, Sir it's Christmas.

SCROOGE: You're right Cratchit. It is Christmas, isn't it?

CRATCHIT: (relieved) Well, yes Sir, it is.

SCROOGE: (*Harshly*) Better put a few ribbons and bows on them before you send 'em out.

Fred enters.

FRED: (*a Niles Crane type*) Ah, sending out Christmas gifts, Uncle?

SCROOGE: Bah.

CRATCHIT: No. Evictions notices.

FRED: Why Uncle, it's Christmas. (*burst of "Deck the Halls" from the ensemble*)

CRATCHIT: That's what I was saying.

SCROOGE: (*Turns to Cratchit*) How would you like to evicted from your job?

CRATCHIT: (*Back peddling*) Yes Sir, that's what I was saying. It's Christmas and what better time to evict people. I have some work to do... in there. (*Cratchit exits*)

FRED: Uncle, you can't put people out on the street today. It's Christmas Eve.

SCROOGE: (*dismissively*) Bah Humbug.

FRED: Christmas a humbug?

SCROOGE: Yes, a HUMBUG.

FRED: Christmas is a merry time, a festive time, a time for giving. In the parlance of the street, Christmas is "dope", Uncle!

SCROOGE: (*beat*) Speaking of dopes...tell me Nephew, what right do you have to be merry or festive? You're poor enough.

FRED: What right do you have to be miserable? You're rich enough!

SCROOGE: Nephew, don't you have someplace you have to be?

FRED: Don't get upset uncle. I didn't mean to "diss" you.

SCROOGE: (*gripping*) Merry Christmas Merry Christmas.... If I had my way it would be illegal to celebrate Christmas, and we'd give the children extra homework to do on Christmas day.

Now Merry Christmas, that.

FRED: But Uncle, why are you so unhappy?

SCROOGE: Nephew, you celebrate Christmas in your way and let me celebrate it in mine.

FRED: But Uncle, you don't celebrate Christmas.

SCROOGE: Then let me leave it alone. Much good Christmas will ever do you. Much good Christmas has ever done you.

FRED: My mother told me that you used to be absolutely giddy about Christmas..

SCROOGE (*shoots him a glare – this is a bad topic*)

FRED: (*taken aback*) I'm sorry, uncle...but you think Christmas has done me no good! On the contrary, I've always thought of Christmas as a time of kindness and giving. The only time I know when men and women open their hearts to their fellow man. And therefore, Uncle, even though Christmas has never put a single simoleon in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good. And I say, God bless it.

CRATCHIT: (*Clapping in agreement*) Amen. Amen.

SCROOGE: (*Turning on Cratchit*) Oh, you liked that did you?

CRATCHIT: It was well put.

SCROOGE: "Unemployment line." How well put was *that*?

FRED: Oh don't be angry, Uncle. Why don't you come to my house and have Christmas dinner with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE: I would rather rip off my eyebrows with duct tape than have dinner with you and that wife of yours.

FRED: Why is that, Uncle?

SCROOGE: Now why did you ever get married?

FRED: Why? Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE: (*Mocking in a girly voice*) I fell in love. I fell in love! (*Regular voice*) I fell in a ditch once but I had the sense to get out of it. Good afternoon Nephew.

FRED: Uncle, we've never had any reason to fight so let's not. I wish you didn't feel this way. I only came here in honor of Christmas and to ask you to honor it too, Uncle. (*gets up to go, putting his hand inside a sock puppet he carries with him*) So Merry Christmas, Uncle Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon, Nephew.

FRED: And a Happy New Year.

SCROOGE: Good-bye.