

MR. SCROOGE ATTENDS A XMAS PARTY

---a one-act by Daniel Curzon

CHARACTERS: (3)

SCROOGE, male, over forty, reformed

FRED, his nephew, in his twenties, a moderate

LILY, Fred's wife, in her twenties, a PC aficionado

SETTING: modern day, including the clothing

RUNNING TIME: 10 minutes or so

LIGHTS UP on a young couple, both crocheting

LILY: How is yours going?

FRED: (holding up his crotchet work) I'm afraid that I am never going to master this.

LILY: You will. But, as we've discussed before, please don't use the term "master."

FRED: I'm sorry, Lily. I forgot.

LILY: At least you try to rid yourself of imperialist vocabulary. Give me a kiss.

(FRED gets up and gives her a kiss on the cheek.)

(There is a knock on the offstage door.)

FRED: Who could that be? The party's not till tomorrow.

LILY: Just ignore it. They'll go away.

(There is another knock on the door.)

FRED: (calling) I'm coming! (Goes offstage)

LILY: I hope it's not your awful Uncle Ebenezer.

FRED: (opening the offstage door) Uncle Ebenezer, how nice to see you!

(FRED and SCROOGE enter the room.)

SCROOGE: I have finally decided to attend one of your Christmas dinners. I'm sorry it's taken me so long. But just recently I have had a change of heart about such things.

FRED: How wonderful! Never too late to enjoy a family Christmas!

SCROOGE: You are so right, dear nephew. I used to be such a curmudgeon, I'm sorry to say, but now I am reformed completely. I see how wonderful humanity is! No more grumpiness. It feels marvelous.

FRED: How wonderful! You haven't met my wife, have you?

SCROOGE: No, I haven't had the pleasure.

LILY: Well, let me introduce myself then. I'm Lily!

SCROOGE: How lovely! Lily of the valley!

LILY: No, just Lily.

SCROOGE: Of course. Just Lily! Call me Uncle Ebenezer.

LILY: Welcome to our house, Uncle.

SCROOGE: (looking around) Am I the first to arrive?

FRED: The party's tomorrow night.

SCROOGE: Oh, damn my eyes! Excuse my language. I'd swear you said it was tonight.

FRED: Never mind! You're welcome anytime.

LILY: Especially after all this time.

SCROOGE: Why, thank you, Lily. Who is not of the valley.

FRED: I'm so glad that you two are hitting it off. To be honest, I was a bit worried how it would go.

SCROOGE: What could go wrong with such agreeable people all around?!

FRED: Would you like some punch? I made it this afternoon.

SCROOGE: I'd love some. I had never drunk alcohol until last week. Now I can't seem to get enough of it.

LILY: Fred makes super punch. I tell him to go easy on the liquor, but he just won't listen.

FRED: My punch is made from a recipe my mother gave me.

SCROOGE: Oh, my late sister. I'm sure it's lovely punch, then.

FRED: (pouring a glass) I've named it for my mother. Fan.

SCROOGE: A sweet, lovely girl she was. She preferred to be called Fan. But I always thought of her by her full name, Fanny.

FRED: Lily? Punch?

LILY: No, thank you, darling.

FRED: I'll have just half a glass. (Pouts it. Toasts.) To my mother!

(SCROOGE and FRED clink glasses.)

SCROOGE: (taking a sip) It reminds me so much of my sister.

LILY: I'm so glad that full name has dropped out of fashion.

4

SCROOGE: Oh, why is that, Lily, not of the valley? There's something to be said for the old ways. (Sniffs his punch) Ah, yes, there's Fanny here.

LILY: Uncle Ebenezer, did you have any trouble finding your way here?

SCROOGE: Not a bit of it! If I must say so myself, I have an excellent sense of direction.

LILY: Even better than your sense of the day of the week?

FRED: (trying to head off any arguments) You two, such energy!

SCROOGE: I did have a tiny problem on my way here.

FRED: Oh?

SCROOGE: I was spat at by two women. I think they were Lesbians.

LILY: What makes you think they were Lesbians?

SCROOGE: I remembered them from the time, some years ago now, when I refused to make a donation to the Billie Jean King Lesbian Retirement Center. They were quite angry with me. And still are, apparently.

LILY: It's never too late to give, Uncle Scrooge. You know that. Fred and I give twice a year.

SCROOGE: Do you? I must write a check in the morning.

LILY: Very good!

FRED: I'm so pleased that you found us at last, dear, dear uncle.

SCROOGE: On my way here, I did have a little contretemps with some street people.

LILY: Street people? What are those?

SCROOGE: The homeless.

LILY: You are referring to the unhoused?

5

SCROOGE: Is that the preferred term now?

LILY: Certainly not “street people.”

FRED: I’m sure they meant no harm.

SCROOGE: They screamed at me and threw goose bones at me.

FRED: Goose bones?

SCROOGE: They were having an early Victorian Christmas dinner in the foyer of a former Walgreens. I could be wrong on the details.

LILY: Why did they scream at you? Did you reprimand them somehow?

SCROOGE: I didn’t mean to.

LILY: Perhaps you showed some micro-aggressions.

SCROOGE: Perhaps I did.

LILY: Perhaps you can apologize to them on your way home.

SCROOGE: If they are still there. Perhaps I could.

LILY: Oh, the homeless will be there. You can be sure of that in this city!

FRED: Maybe we can wrap up some punch and Jello-O salad and you can give it to them?

SCROOGE: Of course! Why didn’t I think of that?!

LILY: Of course, they may not appreciate getting our leftovers.

FRED: Did I mention that I was mugged today?

LILY: Honey, no! What happened?

6

SCROOGE: Yes, I'm curious.

FRED: It was nothing. Just some kids acting up.

SCROOGE: What did they do?

FRED: Two of them jumped on my back and ripped out my hearing aid.

SCROOGE: You wear a hearing aid?

FRED: Not anymore.

SCROOGE: You're so young for a hearing aid!

FRED: I wear it to show solidarity with the hearing impaired? Honey, is that term all right?

LILY: Not really.

FRED: What's the correct term now?

LILY: My understanding is that new terminology is being worked out as we speak.

SCROOGE: I almost forgot, but I myself encountered some minor criminal behavior on my walk here.

FRED: Indeed?

SCROOGE: Somebody ran up to an elderly man -- about my age, in fact-- and smacked him with a croquet mallet.

FRED: Was he hurt?

SCROOGE: I think so. He was out cold.

LILY: Did you stop to render assistance?

7

SCROOGE: I started to, but the culprit waved his croquet mallet at me. But let's get off this awful topic, shall we?

FRED: Absolutely!

LILY: So you left an unconscious man lying on the street?

SCROOGE: I left some coins in his clenched fist.

LILY: Did you?!

SCROOGE: You should have been with me, Lily. You could have helped, I'm sure.

LILY: Well, I wouldn't have left somebody who was knocked out just lying there.

SCROOGE: I did think about calling the police. But there have been so many reports of the police being summoned to help, only to wind up beating the wrong person to death.

LILY: I imagine any excuse will do.

FRED: Lily!

LILY: Oh, shut up, Fred. Now I see where you get your inability to make a good decision about anything.

SCROOGE: Oh, he picked you, Lily, surely one of his super decisions.

LILY: Well, thank you for coming for Christmas dinner, dear Uncle. I'm sure it must be past your bedtime by now.

SCROOGE: Are you asking me to leave?

FRED: No, no, Uncle! Please don't leave.

LILY: He can leave if he wants to, Fred!

SCROOGE: I definitely don't want to.

LILY: We certainly won't stop you.

FRED: (under his breath) I'm not.

SCROOGE: Perhaps we could play some games?!

LILY: What sort of games?

SCROOGE: We had such fun games in my youth. My boss, Mr. Fezziwig, gave a whole hour to play the Spinster's Spinning Wheel! We can use an invisible spinning wheel!

LILY: Spinster? Is that what I think it is?

SCROOGE: It's an unmarried woman over a certain age.

LILY: (sarcastic) Oh my, what an amusing topic.

SCROOGE: There's always charades.

LILY: I don't care for charades.

FRED: Oh, please, honey. You used to love charades when we were dating.

LILY: Did I? I seem to recall a certain unnamed person, named Fred, who couldn't stop giggling over women's body parts when it was his turn.

FRED: I wasn't giggling.

LILY: I distinctly remember you giggling over the word "vulva."

FRED: Did I?

LILY: "Vulva" is a beautiful word. Don't you think so, Uncle Ebenezer?

SCROOGE: Beautiful? . . . Of course. I always said that if I had a daughter, I'd name her Vulva.

LILY: Only if you wish to overly sexualize her.

SCROOGE: Well, it is unlikely that I will have a daughter.



LILY: How lucky for her!

(There is a knock at the door.)

FRED: I'll get it! (Goes offstage.)

(Three singers in tattered clothes appear if possible, or two or three tech people sing offstage.)

SINGERS: God rest ye merry gentlemen.

Let nothing you dismay.

Remember, Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day,

To save us all from Satan's power when we had gone astray.

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!

O tidings of comfort and joy!

FRED: (stepping back in) It's some of the unhoused singing Christmas carols.

SCROOGE: How festive!

LILY: I suppose, if you don't mind exploiting those who must sing or starve on our streets.

FRED: Should I send them away or not?

ONE SINGER: O tidings of comfort and joy!

LILY: Oh, give them some money, Fred! Before they trigger even more negative emotion in me.

(FRED hands the carolers some money offstage.)

FRED: Here you go!

ONE SINGER: Is that all? Fuck you!

(FRED returns fully to the living room.)

10

FRED: Well, that was nice. *Wasn't it*, honey?

LILY: If you find destitute people singing for you *nice*?!

SCROOGE: Well, perhaps I'd better be going.

FRED: We could wrestle up a sandwich for you, Uncle Ebenezer.

SCROOGE: Oh, don't bother.

FRED: Please!

LILY: We don't have any meat!

SCROOGE: I'm fine!

FRED: Of course we'll see you tomorrow night for the party, won't we, Uncle?

SCROOGE: I'll do my best.

FRED: At seven.

SCROOGE: I'll be here with bells on!

(FRED and SCROOGE both look to LILY for her reaction.)

LILY: They made slaves wear bells even when they weren't Christians.

SCROOGE: I'm so glad I came to your party even if it was early. It was such fun!

BLACKOUT