

SCROOGE AND THE THREE WISE GUYS

by Jonathan Deibler



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Scrooge and the Three Wise Guys

A small cast Christmas comedy

by Jonathan Deibler

CAST OF CHARACTERS**Ebenezer Scrooge****Wise Guy 1****Wise Guy 2****Wise Guy 3****Ghost of Christmas Past**

Could simply be a voice from Off-stage.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

This is not Scrooge's night. He's about to get visited by three ghosts when he's rudely awakened by three strange travelers. They're the Wise Guys with gifts of diapers, formula, and a bib (because gold, frankincense, and myrrh aren't practical or safe). It's Bethlehem or bust — but they're hopelessly confused. Scrooge breaks the news to them that they're late, lost, and loony! Through Scrooge's attempts to get them back on track (taking them to church) and into the right story (via time travel), the traditional Christmas story plays out with new implications. First-century Palestine plus nineteenth-century England equals humbug humor for all!

Costumes: Ebenezer Scrooge wears pajamas with a top coat added later. The Wise Guys wear robes and fancy crowns or other headpieces — typical wise men costumes. The Ghost of Christmas Past wears a dark robe (if the character is OnStage).

Set: If desired, all the scenes may be set in different areas of the stage at the beginning to eliminate curtain closings. The characters travel from area to area as the scenes change.

Scene 1 — Scrooge's bedroom. Use a real bed or a church pew or row of chairs with blankets and pillow.

Scene 2 — Church. Use a church pew or four folding chairs set in a row and a Nativity set on a table.

Scene 3 — The street. A newspaper page is on the floor as litter. You will also need a "time machine." This may be a large appliance box with room for all three Wise Guys to stand in. Pool noodles stick out randomly and levers, knobs, and designs are attached or drawn on the outside.

Scene 4 — Return to Scrooge's bedroom.

Props: Wise Guys' gifts of a package of diapers, baby formula, and a baby bib; map; and newspaper.

Scene 1

(SCROOGE's bedroom at nighttime. SCROOGE is in bed. WISE GUYS silently stand at the foot of his bed, looking at SCROOGE as he sleeps. Each of them is holding a gift, but instead of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, they are holding: diapers, formula, and a baby bib. Lights up. SCROOGE startles awake and sits up in bed.)

SCROOGE: Who are you?!

WISE GUY 1: We are the three wise guys.

WISE GUY 2: We come bearing gifts. (Each holds out gift.)

SCROOGE: Wise Men? (Pause) Bah humbug. Are you sure you're in the right place?

WISE GUY 3: Yep. This is the right place: the inn in Bethlehem.

SCROOGE: (Angrily) This is not the inn in Bethlehem! I'm Ebenezer Scrooge and this is my house! You're invading my bedroom!

WISE GUY 1: (To the other two) See? I told you this didn't feel right.

WISE GUY 2: Not again!

WISE GUY 3: This isn't the inn in Bethlehem?

SCROOGE: It most certainly is not! Look, my dead business partner haunted me tonight. He told me that three ghosts are going to visit me. One is going to tell me about Christmas past, one is going to tell me about Christmas present, and one is going to tell me about Christmas future. I'm in for a rough night as it is. What am I supposed to do with the three wise men? How did you guys get in here?

WISE GUY 3: Well, we picked the lock, opened the door, came up the stairs, and then came into your room.

SCROOGE: That's criminal trespassing! I'm going to call the police.

WISE GUY 1: No, don't do that. We've had run-ins with the police before.

SCROOGE: Oh, so you're a criminal gang. I guess I should be afraid of you lot, but I'm not. Get out now! (SCROOGE

1 *gets out of bed and stands up.)*

2 **WISE GUY 2:** Don't you want our gifts?

3 **SCROOGE:** Gifts?! Humbug! You're a bunch of criminals who
4 breaks in and gives people gifts while they're in bed in
5 the middle of the night?!

6 **WISE GUY 1:** No, it's not like that. We're just a little lost.
7 We're looking for the baby Jesus to give him our gifts.
8 *(Holds up his gift.)* Diapers!

9 **WISE GUY 2:** *(Holds up gift.)* Baby formula!

10 **WISE GUY 3:** *(Holds up gift.)* A bib!

11 **SCROOGE:** Diapers, baby formula, and a bib? What kind of
12 wise men are you? Where's the gold, frankincense, and
13 myrrh?

14 **WISE GUY 3:** Oh, we used to have them. But they didn't seem
15 like very practical baby gifts. We traded them for things
16 a mom and dad could really use.

17 **SCROOGE:** Well, they're of no use to me. You don't see a baby
18 around here anywhere, do you? What am I going to do
19 with them? If you want to give me gifts, then get back
20 to the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh. *(Pause)* No,
21 I take that back. Just give me gold, gold, and more gold!

22 **WISE GUY 2:** So you don't want our gifts?

23 **SCROOGE:** What am I going to do with diapers, baby
24 formula, and a bib? At my age I'm more in need of
25 Depends, Ensure, and ... well, I could use a bib, I guess
26 — but one much bigger than that!

27 **WISE GUY 1:** Sorry. We didn't mean to upset you. Can you
28 tell us how to find the baby Jesus? Like I said, we're a
29 little lost.

30 **SCROOGE:** A little lost! I'd say! You guys are from first
31 century Palestine. This is nineteenth century England!

32 **WISE GUY 3:** Is that a problem?

33 **SCROOGE:** *(To audience)* I've never encountered such
34 duncery in my entire life! *(To WISE GUYS)* Yes, this is a
35 problem! You think you're a "little" lost? You can't get
36 more lost than this! Not only are you guys eighteen
37 hundred years late and on the wrong continent, you're
38 in a fictitious story! *(Pointing at chest)* This is me,

1 Ebenezer Scrooge. I'm a figment of the imagination of
 2 Charles Dickens. I'm the main character in his book *A*
 3 *Christmas Carol*. You guys are real-life history. What
 4 about the star? Aren't you guys supposed to be
 5 following a star?

6 WISE GUY 2: Yeah, we started out doing that, but it didn't
 7 seem too reliable. So when we found this map, (*Pulls*
 8 *map out of robe*) we decided to follow it instead.

9 SCROOGE: Let me see it. (*Snatches it from WISE GUY 2 and*
 10 *looks at it.*) This isn't a map to Bethlehem in Palestine.
 11 This is a map to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania!

12 WISE GUY 3: There are two Bethlehems? That explains
 13 things.

14 SCROOGE: How did you come by this? (*Holding out map and*
 15 *pointing at it*) This Bethlehem didn't even exist when you
 16 started your journey!

17 WISE GUY 1: Like I said, we're a little lost. That's the third
 18 time I've had to say that. You don't seem to be all that
 19 smart.

20 SCROOGE: (*To audience*) I don't believe this! (*To WISE GUYS*)
 21 And you call yourselves "wise men"?

22 WISE GUY 2: (*Shrugs.*) Eh, even wise guys make mistakes
 23 sometimes.

24 SCROOGE: Not this big! (*Putting a top coat on over his pajamas*)
 25 Look — let me help you. This wasn't in my plans for
 26 tonight, but I've never met anyone as clueless as your
 27 lot. Come with me.

28 WISE GUY 3: Where are we going?

29 SCROOGE: To help you get your story straight! And once
 30 that's accomplished, maybe I can get some sleep before
 31 my next three visitors. (*ALL exit.*)

32

33

Scene 2

34

35 (*A church on Christmas Eve. The midnight Christmas Eve*
 36 *worship service is about to start. An uneasy SCROOGE and the*
 37 *WISE GUYS hustle in. Finding the place full, SCROOGE*
 38 *hurries them to the front row pew. In front of them is a Nativity*

- 1 *set complete with the wise men. The WISE GUYS are staring*
 2 *around in wonder. They sit down,)*
- 3 **SCROOGE:** *(In a tone of voice indicating nervousness and desiring*
 4 *not to draw attention to himself)* **This is so embarrassing. I**
 5 **haven't been in here in years. People are whispering**
 6 **behind my back. And you three, you're not helping at**
 7 **all! Stop staring around so much. People will think I'm**
 8 **in here with a bunch of weirdos. Which, come to think**
 9 **of it, isn't all that wrong.**
- 10 **WISE GUY 1:** What is this place?
- 11 **SCROOGE:** It's a church, and since it's Christmas Eve,
 12 everybody and his uncle is crammed in here. We have to
 13 take this front row seat. It's the only one left.
- 14 **WISE GUY 2:** I like it.
- 15 **WISE GUY 3:** Me too.
- 16 **SCROOGE:** Look, we're not here to discuss the architecture.
 17 We're here to give you guys a lesson in what you're
 18 supposed to be doing.
- 19 **WISE GUY 1:** Why are all these people here?
- 20 **SCROOGE:** They're here for worship. They're here
 21 celebrating the birth of Christ, which you're *supposed*
 22 to have already done, but you haven't. Just sit back and
 23 listen. *(In a sort of bored exasperation)* They're going to sing
 24 a few songs, and then read from the Bible. They'll read
 25 about how you came to Bethlehem to worship Jesus and
 26 bring him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then
 27 the preacher guy will stand up and he'll talk a long time
 28 about peace and selfless giving — disgusting, in my
 29 opinion. But I've got ghosts coming to change my mind
 30 about that. This guy doesn't have to. Then they'll sing
 31 some more and have Communion and light candles and
 32 sing yet more songs, and then they'll go home. I just
 33 hope something here will click in your brains.
- 34 **WISE GUY 2:** *(Pointing at Nativity set)* What's with all the cute
 35 little statues and that barn thingy?
- 36 **WISE GUY 3:** *(Leaving the pew and getting on his hands and knees*
 37 *to look closely)* **This is kind of cool!**
- 38 **SCROOGE:** Get back in your seat! *(WISE GUY 3 ignores him,*

1 *and WISE GUY 2 and WISE GUY 1 also look closely.)* **You're**
 2 **embarrassing me! That's what you guys are supposed to**
 3 **be looking for. That little one in the manger is Jesus.**
 4 **His parents, Joseph and Mary, are standing on either**
 5 **side. (*Pointing*) And there are the shepherds. Angels**
 6 **have told them about the birth of Jesus. They've come**
 7 **and brought some sheep with them.**

8 **WISE GUY 1: They brought sheep to a newborn baby? That**
 9 **doesn't sound very sanitary. I hope Jesus' mother**
 10 **wouldn't let them come in.**

11 **SCROOGE: She's just given birth. I doubt she cared about**
 12 **sheep coming in. Besides, it's a barn!**

13 **WISE GUY 2: Really? He was born in a barn?**

14 **SCROOGE: Yes really!**

15 **WISE GUY 2: That's not a good place to have a baby.**

16 **SCROOGE: I don't know much about this whole birth thing,**
 17 **but I do know that when the kid's coming, he's coming.**
 18 **There's nothing you can do to stop it. So if you're**
 19 **staying in a barn and it's time for him to make his**
 20 **appearance, (*Claps*) bam! There he is!**

21 **WISE GUY 3: Who are these other guys?**

22 **SCROOGE: That's the three wise men — you guys. They've**
 23 **put them out a little early. They arrive a little later —**
 24 **twelve days from now. But you guys are eighteen**
 25 **hundred years late!**

26 **WISE GUY 1: (*Points at wise men in the manger scene.*) That's us?**

27 **WISE GUY 3: Cool! Hey, guys, we must be famous! (*Picks up a***
 28 ***wise man figurine from the Nativity set and stands and holds***
 29 ***it up for the audience to see.*) We've got our own action**
 30 **figures!**

31 **WISE GUY 1 and WISE GUY 2: (*Pick up other two wise men from***
 32 ***manger.*) Cool!**

33 **SCROOGE: Put them down! Put them down right now! (*The***
 34 ***WISE GUYS put the figures back down in the manger.*)**
 35 **Everyone is staring at you! We've gotta get out of here!**
 36 **(*ALL exit.*)**

37
 38

Scene 3

(A street, immediately after leaving the church. At the end of the street is the time machine. A newspaper lies on the street as litter.)

SCROOGE: That has to be the most embarrassing experience in my entire life! What were you guys thinking? You don't act like that in church!

WISE GUY 1: You seem to know a lot about this Jesus guy and his birth. You must go to this church often.

SCROOGE: Nope, never. The last time I was there was for Confirmation. *(Or "baptism" or whatever fits your denomination.)* As soon as I was confirmed, *(Or baptized)* I quit.

WISE GUY 2: Why'd you quit? They all seemed like nice people. There was a lady who kept smiling at me.

SCROOGE: That's because she's old and demented.

WISE GUY 3: You're not very nice.

SCROOGE: Of course I'm not nice! I'm Ebenezer Scrooge!

WISE GUY 1: Well, you could do with being a bit nicer to people. They looked at you with disgust.

SCROOGE: So what? This is my story, not yours. Like I said, I've got three ghosts visiting me tonight. They're supposed to turn my life around, not you guys. You're in the wrong story. Now how can I get you back? *(He paces back and forth a few times, thinking. The WISE GUYS stand there looking clueless. After a few paces, SCROOGE picks up the newspaper litter.)* Ah, here we go — today's horoscope. This should be right up your alley. You're star gazers, right? Astrologers? *(The WISE GUYS nod in agreement.)* This stuff is total nonsense, but let's see what mine says for today. *(Reading from newspaper)* "Beware. Today you will encounter ignorance beyond anything you've ever imagined." *(To audience)* Wow, that one's accurate! *(To WISE GUYS)* OK, you guys are pagan astrologers. You notice a new star, and you come from the East bearing gifts for the newborn king of Israel. When you get to Israel, you stop by King Herod's place to ask for



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