**NEPHEW FRED, KATE, PARTY GUESTS #1, #2 #3**

**SCENE 14**

***INT. FRED’S PARLOR - AFTERNOON***

*SETTING:*

*The scene takes place DOWNSTAGE RIGHT. Some chairs are arranged in front of the*

*darkened street scene. There is a standing lamp and a table full of refreshments.*

*AT RISE:*

*NEPHEW FRED and his wife, KATE host a joyous party with GUEST #1, GUEST #2 and*

*GUEST #3. All have wine glasses in their hands. Offstage we occasionally hear other*

*guests--who are not seen. The GUESTS chat and laugh as SCROOGE and the SECOND*

1. LIGHTS: FADE UP TO A COZY WARMTH.

2. SCROOGE: Ahh, My nephew, Fred--and his wife, Kate. And their many,

hungry “friends.”

3. FRED: *(laughs)* ...and then he said Christmas was a hum-bug! As I

live! And he believed it too! *(laughs)* Ha-ha-ha-ha!

4. KATE: *(laughs)* More shame for him, Fred.

5. FRED: He’s a comical old fellow--that’s the truth. And not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

6. KATE: I'm sure he is very “rich.” At least you always tell me so.

7. FRED: *(laughs)* What of that, my dear wife? His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it.

8. KATE: I have no patience with him.

*GUESTS #1, #2 and #3 second her opinion. (Off-stage, a game of Blindsman’s Buff is going*

*on. A blindfolded “Topper” wanders on and then off-stage—to disastrous results.)*

9. FRED: Well, I have. I am sorry for him. I couldn't be angry with him

if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims--himself, always. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or...

10. SOUND: [SFX-17] SMALL CRASH. ACTORS--LAUGHTER. “TOPPER!”

11. KATE: *(calling off stage)* Topper! Still playing blind-man’s buff?

12. SOUND: [SFX-18] MEDIUM CRASH. ACTORS--LAUGHTER. “TOPPER!”

13. FRED: Come, now, Topper. Kate’s sister knows you cheat...

14. SOUND: [SFX-19] BIG CRASH. TINKLE BELL. ACTORS--LAUGHTER.

15. FRED: *(uncertain)* I think... *(laughs)*

16. KATE: And so let’s play at forfeits!

*The GUESTS voice their votes--“forfeits” “Yes!” “No!”*

1. KATE: *(topping them)* The game of “Yes and No!” Think of something, dear husband, and we have to find out what.

2. FRED: All right. (*thinking)* Quick now! Ask away!

3. GUEST #1: Vegetable!

4. FRED: No!

5. GUEST #2: Animal?

6. FRED: *(afer a moment)* Well*,* Yes…

7. GUEST #3: A friendly animal!

8. FRED: No!

9. GUEST #1: Disagreeable?

10. FRED: *(laughs)* OhYes!

11. GUEST #2: Savage?

12. FRED: *(roars)* Yeeeeees!

13. GUEST #3: Grunts and growls? Talks?

14. FRED: *(thinking)* Ummm... Yes to both, sometimes!

15. KATE: Hmmm... Lives in London? In a menagerie?

16. FRED: Yes and... No! (*laughs)*

17. GUEST #2: Walks the streets?

18. FRED: Oh, yes!

19. GUEST #3: Horse!

20. FRED: No! No! No!

21. GUEST #1: Then it’s a bull?

22. FRED: No!

23. KATE: Tiger!

24. FRED: (guffaws scoldingly) Noooo!

1. GUEST #2: A bear!

2. FRED: *(swiftly)* No! But... almost.

3. GUEST #3 I have found it out, Fred. I know what it is!

4. FRED: *(chuckling)* You do? What is it?

5. GUEST #3: It’s... your.... Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!

*ALL erupt in laughter.*

6. FRED: Yes! *(laugh)* He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure,

and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. *(hoisting his wineglass, then pausing)* "Still, it’s rather sad. The consequence of his not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office or his dusty chambers. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there in good temper, year after year, and saying, 'Uncle Scrooge, how are you?' If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, *that's* something; and I think I shook him yesterday."

Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment...

*KATE and GUESTS lift their glasses--a bit reluctantly--to toast.*

7. FRED: So, Here! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the

old man, what-ever he is. He wouldn't take it from me, but he may have it, just the same... To Uncle Scrooge! 8. KATE and GUESTS: (*together)* To “Uncle Scrooge!”

*ALL clink their glasses and drink amidst derisive laughter.*

***LIGHTS FADE DOWN ON PARTY***