

Ravouj

A play written by Robert Jackson and Dave McLeish
Original concept by Elgin Louis, Dave McLeish and Robert Jackson

This play is a hilarious spoof that the campus put together for a Christmas pageant.

Original Cast

✚ Ravouj: Elgin	✚ Vimmy: Vera
✚ Ghost: Rob	✚ Kenny: Kenson
✚ Young Ravouj: Clement	✚ Pikky: Yen
✚ Mr Karimansha: Dave	✚ Leeny: Angeline
✚ Mrs Karimansha: Christine	✚ Patty: Martini
✚ Mr Hutton: Minh	✚ George: Thai
✚ Mrs Hutton: Rowarne	✚ Stage Manager: Bozey
✚ Limmy: Louisa	✚ At Restaurant: Julie and Ondrej

Prologue

The ghost, as narrator, is in the middle of the stage.

Ghost: It is now my honour – no, privilege – present to you what you’ve all been waiting for; the classic story of Ebenezer Sc...

Stage manager walks on with headset and clipboard and whispers in Ghost’s ear. Ghost listens incredulously and takes clipboard.

Ghost: Um... I’m sorry about this, but I’m afraid Scrooge is currently being detained for questioning on embezzlement charges. So we present to you instead the lesser-known version of this classic tale – I present to you, direct from Bollywood, India, the inspirational, the witty, the unexpected, Ravouj.

Scene 1

Busy restaurant. Other people are two tables. Ravouj is taking orders at one table.

Rest. 1: Can I get this Vindaloo mild?

Ravouj: (Incredulous) Never! This is an insult to my people! Vindaloo must be so hot that it burns your tongue and makes your breath like fire and smoke come from your ears! There is no other way to make Vindaloo! No – other – way!

Rest. 1: (Shocked) Okay... I’ll... have the pappadums.

Ravouj: (Calmly) Excellent choice madam. And you?

Rest. 2: Do you have any Christmas specials?

Ravouj: Certainly not! It is an abhorrent commercial enterprise which has no place in my restaurant! Christmas is a silly waste of time! I can’t stand people who keep

dribbling on about it! You will eat only Pappadums from the regular menu and there will be no more talk of Christmas in my store. (Snatches menus)

Rest. 2: Then can I just have the soup?

Ravouj: No! No soup for you! Pappadums! (Storms off)

Mr and Mrs Hutton enter.

Mr Hutton: (To Mrs Hutton) Alright, we need enough food for Limmy, Vimmy, Kenny, Pikky, Leeny, Patty and George.

Mrs Hutton: (Looking at handful of coins) But we only have two dollars twenty-five. Is that even enough for two pappadums?

Mr Hutton: Not with GST. And what about the mango lassi? Vimmy loves it.

Mrs Hutton: But it is Christmas. Surely Ravouj will be generous to us. I mean, we come here every week. All our kids are addicted to his pappadums. We must be his most loyal customers.

Ravouj: (coming to them) Who are you and what do you want?

Mrs Hutton: Ravouj, it's us, Mr and Mrs Hutton!

Ravouj: Yes? And?

Mr Hutton: We would like two pappadums and a mango lassi.

Ravouj: Very well. That will be \$5.20.

Mrs Hutton: Well we were wondering, being Christmas and all, if this would be enough (Holds out coins, Ravouj takes and examines them) since you are such a kind and generous man –

Ravouj: What is this? This is enough for one pappadam! And you want two – and a mango lassi as well?

Mrs Hutton: And could we also have some mint sauce? Leeny loves it so.

Ravouj: This is an outrage! Take your one pappadam (takes one from the table) and go!

Rest. 1: (Shocked) Hey, that's my pappadam!

Ravouj: You – shut up!

Mr Hutton: But we're your most loyal customers. We have seven adopted children to feed. And after all, it's Christmas.

Ravouj: On – your – bike!

Mr and Mrs Hutton hold back their tears and, blubbing, take their pappadam.

Mrs Hutton: Thankyou Ravouj.

Mr Hutton: You're always so kind to us. Have a nice Christmas! (They turn to leave)

Ravouj: Thankyou, come again. (As they leave) What kind of lousy riff raff do I attract in this store...

Scene 2

Ravouj's bedroom. Ravouj is wearing a Nike night hat. He is putting his money in a cookie tin which he puts under the mattress.

Ravouj: ...Three twenty, three thirty, three thirty-five, three thirty-six, three thirty-seven... and twenty five cents. A very good day's trading. Must be because of all those silly people who think there's something special about tomorrow. Bah humbug. We will see it is a day just like any other. (Sleeps)

There is a pregnant pause. Ravouj starts snoring. The ghost walks in wearing a top-hat.

Ghost: Bro... hey bro... wake up. Broooo...

Whacks him with a cane.

Ghost: HEY! Wake up you useless lump!

Ravouj: (Waking up) My pappadum! (Notices ghost) Um... yeah. And you are who?

Ghost: (Ominously) I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Ravouj: Why are you here?

Ghost: Wait, I'm getting to that. (Ominously) I was sent to show misers like you the true meaning of Christmas. Come, you must follow me.

Ravouj: Where?

Ghost: Stop interrupting! (Ominously) We shall journey back to when you were just a young piccaninny, right here in this very house.

Ravouj: But I only have my pyjamas on.

Ghost: (Ominously) It matters nothing, for you will be invisible. As everyone knows, you cannot change the past. Now get up, you sluggard!

Ravouj: Eh, are you saying, 'cos I'm black ah, no one will notice me in the dark?

Ravouj gets out of bed and follows the ghost across the stage to reveal...

Scene 3

...the young Ravouj with his parents around a Christmas tree, opening his present.

Ravouj: I remember this! I was six. I had been looking forward to this moment all year because there was only one thing I wanted, and I had asked for it every day, and to six Santas.

Ghost: And do you remember what that was?

Ravouj: As if it were yesterday. It was... a pappadum maker.

The young Ravouj opens his present and it is... a pair of socks. He hastily flings them across the room. The parents are extremely concerned and start to comfort him – their reaction clearly indicates that the kid is crying. A lot.

Parents: It's OK... we're sorry... we couldn't afford a pappadum maker... stop crying.

Ravouj: I was so devastated. I could never forgive them. It was my dream to make pappadums for all the poor and lonely souls in the world. I was going to be the Great Pappadum Maker loved by all for my free and generous pappadums. But my parents would have none of it. I had to do it all myself. Only now have I been able to build my pappadum empire. So from that night on I knew one thing – Christmas was nothing special – nothing at all, not for me, not ever! If I wanted something, I'd have to get it myself.

Ghost: Still so much bitterness... O Ravouj, when will you learn that Christmas is not a time to ask for things, but a time to give?

Ravouj: Where's the fun in that? Let's get out of here. I can't stand it a moment longer.

Ghost: Yes. We must hurry to our next destination. It's somewhere you may not be familiar with, but a place that you should see. So, westward ho!

Scene 4

They walk back across the stage to reveal the Huttons' living room. A tiny Christmas tree with branches missing, no presents and hardly any decorations. The parents and all the kids are seated around a big table and they are talking silently as Ravouj and the ghost approach. The table is adorned with a single pappadum and glasses of water.

Ghost: Ravouj, we have entered... the present. A place where –

Ravouj: Hang on a minute, aren't you the Ghost of Christmas Past?

Ghost: Oh... (Takes off hat and puts on a baseball cap) Happy now?

Ravouj just glares at him. Pause.

Ghost: Good. Right. Well. Here we are at the household of your most loyal customers – the Huttons. If you have helped anyone, Ravouj, then let's see how they are spending Christmas.

Ravouj looks on intently at the ensuing affair.

Mr Hutton: Well, Limmy, Vimmy, Kenny, Pikky, Leeny, Patty, and George, this is a very exciting time. It's the night before Christmas, the time when we can imagine all our dreams coming true. The generous man at the Pappadama Platz gave us this pappadum so that we could have a joyous feast.

Leeny: Where's my mango lassi?

Vimmy: Only one pappadum? For all of us?

Mrs Hutton starts to cry.

Kenny: Do we have to have Indian again?

Mr Hutton: Now kids, we may not always get everything we want, but we know that we can always get by, and trust that we'll never be in need. Limmy, would you like to say grace for us?

They all bow their heads.

Limmy: Thankyou Lord that it's Christmas, and that you give us everything we need, and God bless us, every one.

Mrs Hutton: Now don't all grab at once.

She breaks up the pappadum and distributes it to the children.

Ravouj: See? They're happy.

Ghost: (Slaps forehead) But what about you? What happened to your dream to give pappadums freely to all the lost souls? How can you look upon these poor children and not be... filled with compassion? What is your life amounting to?

Ravouj: Well, I can't just go and give everything away. I have to survive. I'm a businessman. These are tough times. Maybe one day I might learn to be. Let's get out of here. Where do we have to go next?

Ghost: Our final destination lies far away – but it may be a lot closer than you think.

Scene 5

They come to a burned-down restaurant covered in seven feet of ash and burning sulfur. Ravouj stares in horror as the ghost changes into his Grim Reaper garb (i.e. puts a black sheet over his head).

Ghost: (Looking at watch) Ghost of Christmas Future... now. Okay, this is a time in your not-too-distant future.

Ravouj: How could this be... why did... *aaaah!* A ghost!

Ghost: What were you expecting?

Ravouj: But surely this is just one possibility, right? I mean, if it all burns down, my life would amount to... nothing. There has to be some other way. You said we couldn't change the past, but what about the future?

The ghost walks off.

Ravouj: Tell me! I have to know! How can I live with this? Why did you bring me here?

He lies down, then gets up.

Ravouj: It was a dream. I was just dreaming. So that means... (Pause) I will prepare a feast for my poor friends. I must get to work immediately!

He rushes around his little bit of stage, gathering pappadums or making a feast or some such thing. He rushes towards the Hutton residence.

Mr Hutton: Well, Limmy, Vimmy, Kenny, Pikky, Leeny, Patty, and George, this is a very exciting time. It's the night before Christmas, the time when we can imagine all our dreams...

Ravouj: Wait! Wait! I am here! Pappadums for all!

Mrs Hutton: (Going toward the door) Is that you, Ravouj? Why, what a pleasant surprise! Do come in.

Ravouj: (Entering) Why, hello, all my beloved friends – Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas to everyone! This is a time of celebration. I have cheese naan for Limmy, chicken tikka for Vimmy, I have butter chicken for Kenny, I have samosa for Pikky, mango lassi for Leeny, mild vindaloo for Patty, a curry puff for George, lamb korma for Mr Hutton, fruit naan for Mrs Hutton and pappadums with mint sauce for all!

All the kids thank him as they get their meals. Mr and Mrs Hutton are overwhelmed with joy.

Mr Hutton: Well, what do we say kids?

All the kids: (In unison) Wow.

Limmy: There's one thing you forgot.

Ravouj: What is that, my dear Limmy?

Limmy: God bless us, every one!

Ravouj: Yes. God bless us all!

Karaoke.