

A  
CHRISTMAS  
CAROL

Being a Ghost Story of Christmas

From the book by Charles Dickens  
Adapted by Andrew Vonderschmitt

Prefaced by

**A Visit from St. Nicholas**

by Clement Clarke Moore

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ACT 1

**PREFACE**

*(A slightly unkempt woman sits on a stoop with a small circle of street urchins sitting around her, some crawl onto her lap; others fight with one another, etc. She tells a story animatedly with delight and relish. The urchins eat it up.)*

UNKEMPT WOMAN: 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,  
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,  
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,  
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,  
With a little old driver so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:  
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"  
As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;  
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too—  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,

Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.  
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.  
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—  
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”

(Black out)

## PROLOGUE

*(In darkness)*

NARRATION: We have endeavored in this Ghostly little tale, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put our audience out of humor with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with us. May it haunt your houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.

*(Lights up on a bustling winter scene with TOWNSFOLK hurrying from one shop to the other. We see a caroling group enter singing "Deck the Halls")*

*Deck the halls with boughs of holly*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*'Tis the season to be jolly*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*Don we now our gay apparel*

*Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la*

*Troll the ancient Yule-tide carol*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*(SCROOGE enters and walks about with TOWNSFOLK giving him a wide berth. Several people on the street stop and join in the song.)*

*See the blazing Yule before us*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*Strike the harp and join the chorus*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*Follow me in merry measure*

*Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la*

*While I tell of Yule-tide treasure*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*(By now the entire cast of characters joins in.)*

*Fast away the old year passes*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*Hail the new year, lads and lasses*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*Sing we joyous, all together*

*Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la*

*Heedless of the wind and weather*

*Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

*(At the end of the song people hug and wish each other a Merry Christmas as they continue on their ways. NARRATORS follow SCROOGE about during below narration. Neither SCROOGE nor TOWNSFOLK notice the NARRATORS.)*

NARRATION: Ah! (*presenting SCROOGE*) Scrooge! Ebenezer Scrooge! External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge.

NARRATION: No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty.

NARRATION: Foul weather didn't know where to have him.

NARRATION: Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?"

NARRATION: No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge.

NARRATION: But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked; to edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

NARRATION: But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

*(The COUNTING HOUSE is set and SCROOGE and CRATCHIT take their places, working away. Scrooge and Marley sign appears.)*

NARRATION: Marley was dead, to begin with.

NARRATION: There is no doubt whatsoever about that. The register of his burial was signed by...

NARRATION: the clergyman,

NARRATION: the clerk,

NARRATION: the undertaker

NARRATION: and the chief mourner.

NARRATION: Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was considered good for any piece of business he chose to put his hand to.

NARRATION: Marley was as dead as a doornail.

NARRATION: Now, I don't know what there is particularly dead about a doornail. I would think a coffin nail would be a deader piece of iron; but, far be it from me to change the expression.

NARRATION: So, permit me to repeat, once again, emphatically, that Marley was dead as a doornail.

NARRATION: Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he had been partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole friend, and the only man who mourned him...if Scrooge can be said to have mourned at all.

NARRATION: And the mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point we started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story we are going to relate.

NARRATION: Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name.

NARRATION: There it stood, years afterward, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley.

ALL: Scrooge and Marley

NARRATION: The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley.

NARRATION: Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

## SCENE 1: THE COUNTING HOUSE

*(Exit all NARRATORS save for one.)*

NARRATION: Now, once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal. His clerk sat nearby.

*(FRED enters. Crosses to SCROOGE, seated at a high desk, with CRATCHIT seated at a low desk. NARRATOR exits.)*

FRED: A Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE: *(surprised)* What?

FRED: I said, A Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE: Bah, humbug!

FRED: Christmas a humbug, Uncle! Surely you don't mean that!

SCROOGE: Of course I mean it! Merry Christmas, indeed. What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry?

FRED: Come, Uncle. What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE: BAH! Away with Merry Christmas! What's Christmas to you, but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!

FRED: Uncle!

SCROOGE: Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

FRED: Keep it! But you don't keep it.

SCROOGE: Let me leave it alone, then! A lot of good it has done you.

FRED: Well, there are many things from which I have benefited, even if they didn't show a profit, I dare say. Christmas among the rest. I am sure I have always thought of Christmas as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time of year I know of when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts

freely, and think of others as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave. And therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of silver or gold in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

*(CRATCHIT bursts into applause at this, then stops at SCROOGE'S scowl)*

SCROOGE: Another sound out of you, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your position!

*(CRATCHIT slinks back to his work.)*

FRED: Don't be angry, Uncle. Come and dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE: I'll see myself in hell first.

FRED: I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!

*(FRED hurries off.)*

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!

*(FRED poking back in)*

FRED: And a Happy New Year! *(hurries off)*

SCROOGE: Good afternoon!!

FRED *(poking back in)*: And a Merry Christmas to you, Bob Cratchit!

CRATCHIT: Thank you, sir! A Merry Christmas to you!

*(Long awkward silence.)*

SCROOGE: There's another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shilling a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

*(JEEVES AND HOWELL, Charity solicitors, enter.)*

MR. JEEVES: Scrooge and Marley's, I believe? Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE: Marley's dead. In fact, he died seven years ago this very night.

MR. JEEVES: Oh, I am quite sorry to hear it. But I have no doubt his generosity is well represented by his surviving partner.

MR. HOWELL: At this festive season, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and needy, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of basic needs; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, Sir.

SCROOGE: Are there no prisons? Did they disappear?

HOWELL: Oh, no, sir. There are still plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE: And the workhouses for the poor? Still in operation, I assume?

HOWELL: They are. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE: Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I'm very glad to hear it.

JEEVES (*exchanging glances with HOWELL*): Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE: Nothing.

JEEVES: Ah! You wish to be anonymous, then?

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I am taxed for the institutions I have mentioned, and they cost enough. Those who are badly off must go there.

HOWELL: But many can't go there; and many would rather die.

SCROOGE: Oh, well, if they'd rather die, perhaps they should go ahead and do it, and decrease the surplus population. Good. Afternoon.

*(SOLICITORS exit, a few CAROLERS crowd doorway, CRATCHIT is pleased.)*

CAROLERS:

*O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree*

*How lovely are thy branches*

*O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree*

*How lovely are thy branches*

*Your boughs so green in summertime*

*Stay bravely green in wintertime*

*O tannenbaum, o Christmas tree*

*How lovely are...*

SCROOGE (*seizing a ruler*): Get away from here, you! I didn't ask to be bothered with that noise!

*(CAROLERS rush off. Another awkward silence.)*

SCROOGE (*to CRATCHIT*): You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT: If it's quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE: It's not convenient. And it's not fair. If I was to hold back half a crown for it, you'd think you were being abused, no doubt. And yet you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work!

CRATCHIT: It's only once a year, sir.

SCROOGE: Hmph! A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December. But I suppose you must have it. Be here all the earlier next morning!

CRATCHIT: Oh, yes, sir, I shall. I certainly shall.

*(SCROOGE exits. CRATCHIT dons scarf and hat, snuffs his candle, and turns to meet TINY TIM, hobbling on with crutch, face aglow. Bustling town scene reappears.)*

TINY TIM: Father!

CRATCHIT: Hello, my dear son!

TINY TIM: Father, I have been waiting for you!

CRATCHIT: Let's go by Corn Hill, and watch the children play. Soon you will be there, too, playing with them!

TINY TIM: I feel that I'm getting stronger every day.

CRATCHIT: Oh, you are, my son. You are. And do you remember what tomorrow is?

TINY TIM: Christmas Day!

CRATCHIT: And I am to have the whole day off to celebrate with my family.

TINY TIM: Hoorah for Christmas!

*(CAROLERS reappear singing JINGLE BELLS. NARRATORS appear and watch as CRATCHIT picks up TINY TIM and bears him off joining in with the CAROLERS. Just as before TOWNSFOLK join in the song until everyone is singing at the end.)*

*Dashing through the snow  
In a one horse open sleigh  
O'er the fields we go  
Laughing all the way  
Bells on bob tails ring  
Making Spirits bright  
What fun it is to laugh and sing  
A sleighing song tonight*

*Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one horse open sleigh  
Jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one horse open sleigh*

*A day or two ago  
I thought I'd take a ride  
And soon Miss Fanny Bright  
Was seated by my side  
The horse was lean and lank  
Misfortune seemed his lot*

*We got into a drifted bank*

*And then we got upsot*

*Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells*

*Jingle all the way*

*Oh, what fun it is to ride*

*In a one horse open sleigh*

*Jingle bells, jingle bells*

*Jingle all the way*

*Oh, what fun it is to ride*

*In a one horse open sleigh yeah*

*(At the end of the song TOWNSFOLK make their ways offstage in various directions revealing SCROOGE in his chambers.)*

NARRATION: Oh, Scrooge—he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, he was. A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner, to be sure! Secret, self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.

NARRATION: He carried his own low temperature with him everywhere he went; he iced his office in the dog-days, and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

NARRATION: Scrooge always took his melancholy dinner in the same melancholy tavern, and this night was no different. He read all the papers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, before he took himself home to bed.

NARRATION: He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms. It was old and dreary, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge.

NARRATION: Upon arriving in his chambers, Scrooge prepared for bed and sat down before the fire to take his gruel. It was a very low fire, indeed; nothing on such a bitter night.

## SCENE 2: THE BEDROOM

*(Lights up on SCROOGE, sitting with his gruel. The sound of chains dragging on the floor momentarily startle him.)*

SCROOGE: Humbug!

*(He goes back to his gruel. Suddenly calling bells begin to ring, startling SCROOGE again. It begins slowly at first, then becomes faster and louder, more insistent. It stops just as suddenly, leaving SCROOGE momentarily frozen. We hear the sound of heavy chains being dragged across a floor, coming closer. Scrooge looks up, spooked.)*

MARLEY *(off stage, in a booming voice)*: Scrooge!

*(SCROOGE springs up from his chair, dropping bowl and spoon.)*

MARLEY: Scro-o-ooge!!

NARRATORS *(Joining in with Ghostly effect)*: Scrooooge!

SCROOGE *(after a pause)*: Humbug! I won't believe it!

*(MARLEY enters slowly, a grayish-white figure bound in cash-boxes and thick ledgers on oversized chains secured with huge padlocks, all of the same color.)*

SCROOGE: How's this?! What do you want with me?

MARLEY: Much!

SCROOGE: Who are you?

MARLEY: Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE: Alright, who were you then?

MARLEY: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

*(Long silence.)*

MARLEY: You don't believe in me.

SCROOGE: I don't.

MARLEY: What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?

SCROOGE: I don't know.

MARLEY: Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE: Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are! Humbug, I tell you! humbug!

*(Silence.)*

MARLEY *(screaming monstrously and joined by NARRATORS, rattle of chains, general cacophony)*: AAAHHH!

SCROOGE *(dropping to his knees)*: Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

MARLEY: Man of the worldly mind! Do you believe in me or not?

SCROOGE: I do. I must! But why do Ghosts walk the earth, and why do they come to me?

MARLEY: It is required of every man that the Spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that Spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!

*(MARLEY raises another cry, shaking his chains and is joined by the offstage NARRATORS. SCROOGE cowers.)*

SCROOGE: You are fettered. Tell me why.

MARLEY: I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, yard by yard, and wore it of my own free will. Is the pattern strange to you? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was as long and heavy as this seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it since! Yours is a ponderous chain!

*(SCROOGE looks about him on the floor, seeing nothing.)*

SCROOGE: Jacob, old friend, please, speak comfort to me.

MARLEY: I have none to give. I have little time. I cannot rest, I cannot linger anywhere. My Ghost never walked beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole.

SCROOGE *(starting to stand)*: But you always were a good man of business, Jacob.

MARLEY: Business?! Humankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The

dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business! *(beat)* Hear me! My time is nearly done!

SCROOGE: I will, Jacob. But don't be hard on me!

MARLEY: I am here to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate, a chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE: You always were a good friend! Thankee!

MARLEY: You will be visited by three Ghosts.

SCROOGE *(nervously)*: Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

MARLEY: It is.

SCROOGE: Oh, well, then I, I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY: Without their visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one.

SCROOGE *(standing)*: Can't they all come at once, and have it over with, Jacob?

MARLEY: Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third, upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and for your sake, take care that you remember what has passed between us!

*(MARLEY backs up, exits. We hear screams of remorse and suffering off stage.*

*SCROOGE attempts to shake the whole thing off.)*

SCROOGE: Oh, humb...

*(Lights dim. SCROOGE paces the floor, crawls into bed, tosses and turns.)*

SCROOGE: Was it a dream, then? *(Gets out of bed, paces.)*

*(CLOCK CHIME.)*

SCROOGE *(Paces)*: A quarter past.

*(CHIME.)*

SCROOGE: Half past.

*(CHIME.)*

SCROOGE: A quarter to it.

*(CHIME. SCROOGE jumps in bed, hides under covers. In a moment he peeks out.)*

SCROOGE Ha! The hour itself,...and nothing else!

*(Pleased with himself, he prepares for sleep. A figure emerges and takes position at the head of SCROOGE'S bed.)*

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST (GCP): Scrooge!

SCROOGE *(startled, sitting up)*: Ahh!

*(His head swivels left, as of its own accord. He sees GCP, a striking figure with bright flowing hair in a white robe bedecked tastefully with summer flowers, and a silver sash. Their expression is bright, full of life and hope. They hold a branch of green holly. A bright light accompanies them.)*

SCROOGE: Are you the Ghost whose coming was foretold to me?

GCP: I am!

SCROOGE: Who, and what, are you?

GCP: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE *(looking them over)*: Long past?

GCP: No. Your past.

SCROOGE: What brings you here?

GCP: Your welfare, of course!

SCROOGE: I can't think of anything more conducive to my welfare than a night of uninterrupted sleep.

GCP: Your reformation, then! Take heed! Rise, and walk with me!

*(GCP takes hold of SCROOGE'S arm. He rises and walks. Set transforms to a country scene in winter.)*

### SCENE 3: OUTDOORS

SCROOGE: Good heaven! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!

*(Moment)*

GCP: Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE *(weeping a little)*: What's what?...oh, nothing. Lead me where you would, Ghost.

GCP: Do you remember the way, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE: Remember it! I could walk it blindfolded!

GCP: Strange, that you've forgotten it for so many years.

*(A small group of CHILDREN run on, laughing, jostling, joking, celebrating holiday from school. They stop and huddle. Scrooge looks on, wide-eyed.)*

SCROOGE: Why, I know them! Hello!

GCP: These are merely shadows of the things that have been. They are not aware of us.

*(CHILDREN sing a rousing rendition of "Up on the Housetop")*

*Up on the housetop, reindeer pause*

*Out jumps good ol' Santa Claus*

*Down through the chimney with lots of toys*

*All for the little ones, Christmas joys*

*Ho, Ho, Ho! Who wouldn't go?*

*Ho, Ho, Ho! Who wouldn't go?*

*Up on the housetop, click, click, click*

*Down through the chimney with good Saint Nick*

*First comes the stocking of little Nell*

*Oh, dear Santa, fill it well*

*Give her a dolly that laughs and cries*

*One that will open and shut her eyes*

*Ho, Ho, Ho! Who wouldn't go?*  
*Ho, Ho, Ho! Who wouldn't go?*  
*Up on the housetop, click, click, click*  
*Down through the chimney with good Saint Nick*  
*Next comes the stocking of little Will*  
*Oh, just see what a glorious fill*  
*Here is a hammer and lots of tacks*  
*Also a ball and a whip that cracks*  
*Ho, Ho, Ho! Who wouldn't go?*  
*Ho, Ho, Ho! Who wouldn't go?*  
*Up on the housetop, click, click, click*  
*Down through the chimney with good Saint Nick*  
*What'd ya-know? its 'ol Saint Nick!*

CHILDREN (*breaking up*): Well, Merry Christmas!...Merry Christmas!...Say hello to your sister for me!...Don't eat too much figgy pudding!...Ha ha! (*They split up and exit.*)

(*Lights dim. We see a small boy sitting alone. He is reading a book. He looks sad. SCROOGE notices him.*)

GCP: The school is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

(*SCROOGE approaches.*)

SCROOGE: My mother died giving birth to my sister. My father grew morose and seemed to begrudge us both ever after. But! He was not alone, you see! He had...I had... I had my books, friends were found within those pages.

GCP: You did. He did.

SCROOGE: (*suddenly excited, almost childlike*) Why, it's Ali Baba! It's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And the Sultan's Groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Serve him right. I'm glad of

it. What business had he to be married to the Princess?! Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe? And there goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloa! Hoop! Halloo!

*(Pause as SCROOGE returns to his melancholy demeanor)*

SCROOGE: Poor boy....I wish.

GCP: What is it?

SCROOGE: It's nothing. There were carolers at my door last night. I should like to have given them something. That's all.

GCP: Let us see another Christmas!

*(Light change, revealing Ebenezer as a young adult, pacing back and forth, agitated. FAN enters, throws her arms around him.)*

FAN: Dear, dear brother!

EBENEZER: Fan! Little Fan! You've grown!

FAN: I have come to bring you home, dear brother! *(All aglow, quite beside herself with joy.)*

EBENEZER: Home, Fan?

FAN: Yes! Home, for good and all! Father is much kinder than he used to be. He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. Ebenezer, Father has arranged an apprenticeship for you. You're to be a man, and begin your career! You'll never have to spend another moment in this dreadful school. But first we'll be together all Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world!

EBENEZER: You are quite a woman, little Fan!

*(They stand in tableau under the following.)*

GCP: Your sister was a frail creature, and often ill; but she had a large heart.

SCROOGE: So she had. You're right about that, Ghost. I'll not contradict it, God forbid!

FAN: Come, Ebenezer, pack your things. The carriage is just outside!

*(They exit.)*

GCP: Your sister died a young woman, but she did have a child, as I recall.

SCROOGE (thoughtful): Yes, a son, my nephew. His name is Fred.

GCP: Your nephew, Ebenezer; the only family you have left.

SCROOGE: Yes...

GCP: Come along, Ebenezer. It is time to see another Christmas.

#### SCENE 4: FEZZIWIG'S ESTABLISHMENT

*(FEZZIWIG is seated at a high desk, busily engaged. A table laden with bolts of cloth or other goods sits center. A handful of workers, including EBENEZER, are busy there.)*

GCP: Do you know this place?

SCROOGE: Know it! This is where I was apprenticed! Look! It's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart! Fezziwig, alive again! And there's Dick Wilkins! We were the best of friends!

*(FEZZIWIG lays down his quill, stretches, rubs his hands together and claps.)*

FEZZIWIG: Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick! No more work tonight, my boys! It's Christmas Eve! Clear all this nonsense away, all of you, we must make room. Life is too short for all work and no play. I say it's time for a party! Hiho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!

*(Table and desk are moved. More revelers appear, and MRS. FEZZIWIG with her daughters. They greet one another. BELLE is targeted by EBENEZER. He is clearly smitten. Several revelers sing GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN.)*

REVELERS:

*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 pow'r*

*When we we're gone astray*

*Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*Comfort and joy*

*Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*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 pow'r  
When we were gone astray  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy  
Comfort and joy  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*In Bethlehem, in Israel  
This blessed Babe was born  
And laid within a manger  
Upon this blessed morn  
The which His Mother Mary  
Did nothing take in scorn  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy  
Comfort and joy  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*Fear not then, said the Angel  
Let nothing you affright  
This day is born a Savior  
Of a pure Virgin bright  
To free all those who trust in Him  
From Satan's pow'r and might  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy  
Comfort and joy  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*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 pow'r  
When we were gone astray  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy  
Comfort and joy  
Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*(REVELERS line up to dance.. EBENEZER and BELLE find each other.)*

*(As the party wraps up EBENEZER says goodbye to BELLE, who exits with others.)*

GCP: It's such a small thing, to make these silly people feel so much gratitude and joy.

SCROOGE: Small thing!

GCP: Is it not? After all, what did he do, this Fezziwig? Spent a few pounds on a party. Does he deserve such praise as this?

SCROOGE: It isn't that, Ghost. Why, Mr. Fezziwig had the power to make us happy. He made our work pleasant, just in the way he looked at us, and the way he addressed us! A thousand such little things add up, you know, until the happiness he gave is as great as if it cost a fortune, and...

*(Lights dim to black, leaving SCROOGE and GCP in spot.)*

GCP: What is it?

SCROOGE: Nothing.

GCP: Something, I think.

SCROOGE: No, I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.

GCP: Come, Ebenezer, my time grows short. Look!

## SCENE 5: OUTDOORS

*(Lights up, revealing EBENEZER and BELLE, seated side by side on a bench. BELLE is weeping, a handkerchief to her face.)*

BELLE: It matters little. To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

EBENEZER: What idol has displaced you?

BELLE: A golden one.

EBENEZER: This is the even-handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

BELLE: You fear the world too much, Ebenezer. All your other hopes have merged into the one hope of eluding the disdain of others. I have seen your nobler virtues fall away, one by one, until nothing is left but one master-passion—the pursuit of profit. It consumes you.

EBENEZER: What then? Even if I have grown wiser and more astute, what then? I haven't changed my feelings toward you.

BELLE: Oh, Ebenezer, our promise to one another is an old one. We made it when we were young and poor, and happy to remain so until, in good season, we could improve our fortune together by patience and hard work. But you've changed. You are not the same man.

EBENEZER: I was a boy.

BELLE: That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.

EBENEZER: Have I ever sought release?

BELLE: In words. No, Never.

EBENEZER: In what, then?

BELLE: In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your

sight. Tell me, Ebenezer: if all of this had not happened, would you seek me out and try to win me now, a poor dower-less girl with nothing to bring to a marriage?

*(EBENEZER looks down, unable to answer the question.)*

BELLE *(standing)*: Just as I thought. You may feel sad now, Ebenezer, but I've no doubt that you will dismiss the thought of me very soon, as if you were glad to have awakened from a bad dream. I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!

*(Exits. Lights dim again.)*

SCROOGE: Ghost! Show me no more! Conduct me home! Why do you enjoy torturing me? Please, I beg you. Take me away from here! I can bear no more. No more!

GCP: One shadow more!

*(Lights change. In the dim we hear a knock on a door. CHILDREN rush to meet a man laden with gifts with screams of "Merry Christmas, Daddy!" "What did you bring me?!" etc. The CHILDREN embrace him and pull the gifts from his hands as BELLE approaches shooing the CHILDREN off.)*

HUSBAND: Belle, I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.

BELLE: Who was it?

HUSBAND: Guess!

BELLE: How can I? Tut, don't I know? *(laughing as HUSBAND laughs)* Mr. Scrooge.

HUSBAND: Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.

SCROOGE: Ghost!

GCP: I told you these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me!

SCROOGE: *(defeated)* I cannot bear more.

*(Light change.)*

## SCENE 6: THE BEDROOM

*(SCROOGE finds himself back in bed, only to be awakened by the clock chiming one o'clock. He sits up in bed. He looks around, expecting another ghost. Just as he lies down again, he hears...)*

Ghost of Christmas Present (GCP): Ha ha ha ha! Ha ha ha Ha ha! A-HA HA HA HA HA!

SCROOGE! EBENEZER SCROOGE!

*(As SCROOGE alights from bed, lights up to reveal GCP. He is an impressive figure in full beard, wearing a green robe trimmed in white fur and crowned with a holly wreath. He holds a golden torch much like the Horn of Plenty in his hand which is filled with star dust. SCROOGE approaches gingerly. SCROOGE'S room is transformed.)*

GCP: Come! Come here and know me better, man! ...I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the likes of me before, eh? Ha ha ha ha!

SCROOGE: No, never.

GCP: You've never walked forth with any of my elder brothers born in these later years?

SCROOGE: I don't think I have. I'm afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

GCP: Ha ha ha! More than eighteen hundred! Ha ha!

SCROOGE: A tremendous family to provide for.

*(GCP stands.)*

SCROOGE: Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have ought to teach me, let me profit by it.

GCP *(approaching)*: Take hold of my robe, Ebenezer Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Where, pray tell, are we going?

GCP: You will see!

*(SCROOGE reaches out nervously and touches the robe. Light change. Street scene/market. There is a great happy bustle of chattering, greeting, a bit of good-natured market haggling. SCROOGE and GCP appear. As they make their way among the crowd, GCP sprinkles star dust on those who pass by carrying foodstuff. When*

*friendly haggling turns not-so-friendly GCP sprinkles from his torch and those who are arguing return to good humor.)*

SCROOGE: Is there a peculiar flavor in what you sprinkle from your torch?

GCP: There is, indeed. My own.

SCROOGE: Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?

GCP: To any kindly given. To a poor one most.

SCROOGE: Why to a poor one most?

GCP: Because it needs it most. Now, further on!

*(Lights change as crowd exits, leaving SCROOGE and GCP alone on stage. Scene change to Cratchit's.)*

## SCENE 7: CRATCHIT HOME

*(Lights up on the CRATCHIT family table.)*

MRS. CRATCHIT: What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha wasn't this late last Christmas by half an hour!

*(Just then, MARTHA enters.)*

MARTHA: Here I am, Mother!

YOUNGER CRATCHITS: Here's Martha, mother! My, there's such a goose, Martha! Hurrah!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are! *(kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her)*

MARTHA: We had a great deal of work to finish at the milliner's last night, and a great deal to clear away this morning!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Well, never mind. You are home now! Sit down and warm yourself, dear.

BELINDA: Father will be home any minute. Hide, Martha, hide!

*(MARTHA hides herself. CRATCHIT enters just then, bearing TINY TIM, holding his crutch. He is enthusiastically greeted by his family, kissed by his wife.)*

CRATCHIT: Why, where's Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT: She won't be coming for Christmas this year, I'm afraid.

CRATCHIT: What? Not coming for Christmas!

MARTHA *(popping out)*: Oh, here I am, Father!

*(She embraces him. All cheer. CRATCHIT covers her in a thousand kisses.)*

TWO YOUNGER CRATCHITS: Come, Tim! Come hear the pudding singing in the copper!

*(They bear him off.)*

MRS. CRATCHIT: And did little Tim behave himself in church?

CRATCHIT: As good as gold, and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home,

that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant for them to remember, on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see... He's grows strong and hearty every day...

*(CHILDREN return with TINY TIM)*

MRS. CRATCHIT: Martha, help me with the goose. *(Children cheering.)*

PETER: There's such a goose, Father, such as we've never had before!

*(MRS. CRATCHIT re-enters in high procession with a small, sad goose on a platter, followed in parade by MARTHA and THE TWO YOUNGER CRATCHITS. It is placed on the table and all are seated.)*

THE CHILDREN *(overlapping)*: Such a goose!...Just smell the sage and onion!...Mother outdid herself this year...We got it for a good price, Father!...It wasn't expensive at all!

CRATCHIT *(standing and raising his cup)*: A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

ALL: God bless us!

TINY TIM: God bless us, everyone!

*(Lights dim on the table as dinner is served, under the following.)*

SCROOGE: I had no idea Cratchit had a crippled son.

GCP: I wonder why.

SCROOGE: Tell me, Ghost. Will the boy live?

GCP: I see a vacant seat at this table, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.

SCROOGE *(startled)*: No, no, that cannot be. Say he will be spared.

GCP: What difference does it make? If he is likely to die, then let him die, and decrease the surplus population!

SCROOGE *(stung)*: You use my own words against me.

GCP: Man, if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! To hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!

CRATCHIT: And now, dear ones, a toast. I give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of our feast.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Hmph! The founder of our feast, indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

CRATCHIT: My dear. The children. Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT: It should be Christmas Day, when one would drink the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Ebenezer Scrooge. No one knows it better than you, Bob.

CRATCHIT: My dear. Have a little charity.

MRS. CRATCHIT (*after a pause*): Oh, alright, then. I'll drink his health, for your sake and the Day's sake, but not for his. (*raising her cup*) Long life to him! A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!

CRATCHIT: To Mr. Scrooge.

MARTHA: To Mr. Scrooge.

ALL: To Mr. Scrooge.

*(All drink. GCP approaches and sprinkles star dust liberally on the CRATCHIT table. At which the family brightens up considerably.)*

*(TINY TIM begins HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING! Family joins in and shortly thereafter the entire cast takes the stage and finishes the song as the curtain lowers.)*

*Hark! the herald angels sing*

*Glory to the newborn King*

*Peace on earth, and mercy mild*

*God and sinners reconciled*

*Joyful, all ye nations, rise*

*Join the triumph of the skies*

*With th' angelic host proclaim*

*Christ is born in Bethlehem*

*Har, the herald angels sing*

*Glory to the newborn King  
Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of peace  
Hail! the Son of Righteousness  
Light and life to all he brings  
Risen with healing in his wings  
Mild he lays his glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the some of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King  
Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With th' angelic host proclaim  
Christ is born in Bethlehem  
Hark, the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King*

## **INTERMISSION**

ACT 2

**SCENE 1: FRED'S HOME**

*(Laughter as lights come up. FRED and party guests are playing Blind Man's Bluff. FRED is it, JANET is teasing him, FRED peeks out and catches her.)*

JANET: *(laughing)* No fair! No fair, Fred, you cheated!

GUEST 2: He can't help it, Janet, with such an honest Uncle as Ebenezer Scrooge!

FRED: *(laughing)* Now, now be kind to my relation- I have but one- strained as he is- I left some Christmas greetings with him only today and I'm unsure if his fragile spirit can take much more mirth even from this distance.

GUEST 1: You don't mean you invited him again?

FRED: I did indeed.

GUEST 2: Never before was there such a glutton for punishment as our Fred.

GUEST 3: And how was his answer?

FRED: He said that Christmas was a humbug. He believed it, too!

JANET: More shame for him, Fred!

FRED: He's really a comical old fellow, and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offenses carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

JANET: I'm sure he is very rich, Fred. At least you always tell me so.

FRED: What of that, my dear? His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it. And I sincerely doubt he would ever consider benefitting us with it. *(laughter)*

JANET: Well, I have no patience for him.

FRED: Oh, but I have! Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. Cheerful music, wonderful company-

JANET: and an exquisite meal I might add!

GUESTS: Hear, hear!

FRED: Quite so, dear wife. If he would take even an ounce of this good cheer from us, instead of his own dismal, daily medicine, why I think- I think... Suffice to say I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not. Why I think I may have cracked the old boy yesterday, if I do say so myself! (*laughter*) But I warrant we should not lose our own pleasant times in waiting- we must have another game!

(*ALL Cheering.*)

JANET: Any requests?

GUEST 2: How, Why, When, and Where!

FRED: An excellent choice!

GUEST 1: I've got one!

GUEST 3: Off you go then!

GUEST 2: How do you like it?

GUEST 1: In very small doses.

SCROOGE: It might be Janet's punch for all the ridiculous cheer I see about my nephew.

JANET: When do you like it?

GUEST 1: Only after you've taken it.

FRED: Why do you like it?

GUEST 1: Certainly, you must or you'll be put outside!

GUEST 3: Janet's rum punch!

SCROOGE: (*laughing in spite of himself*) Hah! I got it right.

GUEST 1: Right on the nose, well done!

SCROOGE: I got it first!

JANET: All right then. Here's one

GUEST 1: Where do you like it?

JANET: In the hall, thank you very much.

SCROOGE: A coat I'll bet. Or a scarf.

FRED: It's a hat!

JANET: Fred!

FRED: I forgot only yesterday to take mine off, I thought she was going to box my ears!

SCROOGE: And she should have too, silly boy. I would've gotten it, Spirit, I'm very clever you know- I just needed a little more time- Oh! I have one! Pick me!

GCP: You like this game?

SCROOGE: Like it? I'm great at it! Just watch!

GUEST 2: Alright then let me have a go.

SCROOGE & GUEST 1: When do you like it?

GUEST 2: Why anytime at all.

SCROOGE: *(to himself)* Anytime...?

JANET: How do you like it?

GUEST 2: Exactly.

SCROOGE: *(to himself)* exact...

GUEST 1: Why do you like it?

GUEST 2: Because it always tells the truth.

SCROOGE: A pocketwatch! Spirit- that's the one I was going to say!

FRED: Is it a dog?

SCROOGE: A dog? No, no you silly fool- an exact dog?

GUEST 2: No.

GUEST 3: A cigar.

GUEST 2: Wrong again.

SCROOGE: A pocketwatch, a pocketwatch I'm telling you- it's so easy!

JANET: Tell us, Catherine, we give up!

GUEST 2: A pocketwatch of course.

SCROOGE: Haha! I told you!

FRED: Very good, but how about this one...

JANET: When do you like it?

FRED: Infrequently, yet surprisingly often.

GUEST 2: How do you like it?

FRED: (*laughing*) Indeed that is the question... with effort.

GUEST 1: Where do you like it?

FRED: hmmm... at a distance.

GUEST 3: Why do you like it?

FRED: Because in all of life nothing can be more rewarding than a challenge.

GCP: You've gone quiet.

SCROOGE: No, no I'm letting them work this one out.

GUEST 2: Infrequently, with effort, at a distance...

GCP: They're having a tough time of it-

SCROOGE: Indeed. There's a trick to this one, you know. A clever fellow my nephew- not too bright but clever.

GUEST 1: Horse riding?

FRED: No.

SCROOGE: Horse riding- the very idea!

GUEST 3: Fred, riding horses? Hah!

JANET: I know what it is! It is your Uncle Scrooge!! (*laughter*)

FRED: And the lady has it! (*laughs*) He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here's to Uncle Scrooge!

ALL: Uncle Scrooge! (*laughter, as all drink.*)

(*Lights fade. Light remains on SCROOGE and GCP.*)

SCROOGE: I would normally take offense at such laughter at my expense. However, in view of the general gaiety of the occasion, I am inclined to overlook it. After all, I knew what the clues were pointing to all along. (*a small giggle, Scrooge toasts to himself*) To me!

GCP: It is time to go Scrooge.

SCROOGE: But, Spirit, they're to play another game I know it- might we stay only a half hour more?

GCP: *(smiling)* There is little time and my life upon this globe is very brief. It ends tonight at midnight.

SCROOGE: Tonight!

GCP: That is quite noble of you!

*(We see something at GCP's feet. SCROOGE notices it.)*

SCROOGE: Forgive me, Ghost, if I am not justified in asking, but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding there, from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?

GCP: It might be a claw, for all the flesh there is on it. Look here!

*(GCP draws aside the folds of his robe to disclose WANT and IGNORANCE—two thin, dirty, wretched, scowling waifs crouched and clutching at his feet.)*

SCROOGE *(alarmed)*: Ghost! Are they yours?

GCP: No! They are yours! Do you not know them? This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their kind, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see written the word DOOM, unless the writing be erased.

SCROOGE: Have they no refuge or resource?

GCP: 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses'?

*(Suddenly the chime of twelve is heard. Lights to black. A loud, stormy noise. Wind and thunder. GCP's last line reverberates with the help of offstage narration.)*

## SCENE 2: THE DARKNESS

*(Spot on SCROOGE, standing, dazed. Sound of wind and thunder. GCP has disappeared and in his place approaches the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (GCY) in fog. It is a tall figure, entirely cloaked and hooded in black. All that we will see of this figure are its skeletal hands.)*

SCROOGE: I take it that I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?

*(GCY slowly nods.)*

SCROOGE: You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us. Is that not so, Ghost?

*(GCY nods.)*

SCROOGE: Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any specter I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?

*(GCY lifts its arm and points beyond SCROOGE.)*

SCROOGE (seeing that he is powerless to engage it): Very well! Lead on, then! The night is passing fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Ghost!

*(GCY walks slowly, SCROOGE following. Opposite, a small band of brokers appear.)*

SCROOGE: Why, I know those men! And this place—it is the stock exchange! It's a second home to me.

*(GCY only points to the group of men.)*

BROKER 1: No, I don't know anything about it, either way. I only know he's dead.

BROKER 2: When did he die?

BROKER 1: Last night, I believe.

BROKER 2: Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

BROKER 1 *(yawning)*: God knows.

BROKER 2: What has he done with his money?

BROKER 1: I haven't heard. Left it with his company, perhaps. I only know he hasn't left it to me.

*(all laugh)*

BROKER 2: Well, it's likely to be a cheap funeral. I don't know anybody who would go to it. Suppose we volunteer to attend?

BROKER 1: I don't mind going if a lunch is provided. But I must be fed, for all the trouble it's worth. *(laughter)*

BROKER 2: Well, it matters little to me either way. I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if you will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Goodbye!

BROKER 1: Goodbye!

*(SCROOGE looks up at the GCY, perplexed.)*

SCROOGE: Have these men no sense of decency or decorum? Ghost, what is this? Why am I seeing this?

*(GCY points in another direction. Lights change.)*

BROKER 3: How are you?

BROKER 4: How are you?

BROKER 3: Well! Old Scratch has got his own at last, hey?

BROKER 4: So I am told. Cold, isn't it?

BROKER 3: Seasonable for Christmas time. You're not a skater, I suppose?

BROKER 4: No. No. Something else to think of. I'd break my neck. Good morning!

*(GCY turns and points in the opposite direction, at which lights come up opposite, revealing a greasy, bedraggled old man sitting on a chair and surrounded by an odd collection of junk in and out of boxes—old iron, rags, old clothes, moldy books, bottles, etc. Two old crones and a man in black slink into the scene, carrying bundles, as SCROOGE observes.)*

MRS. OLIVER: Let the charwoman alone to be the first! For I entered first! Let the laundress, Mrs. Dilber, alone to be the second; and let the undertaker's man be the third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!

OLD JOE: You couldn't have met in a better place. Come in, come in to the parlor, and sit! Don't be shy, we're all suitable to our calling. We're well matched, to be sure! Ha ha! Come in!

*(MRS. OLIVER throws her bundle to the floor and plops herself down on a stool with a sigh.)*

MRS. OLIVER: What odds then? What odds, Mrs. Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did!

MRS. DILBER: That's true, indeed! No man more so.

MRS. OLIVER: Well then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who's the wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?

MRS. DILBER: No, indeed!

MR. TACKLETON: We should hope not.

MRS. OLIVER: Very well then. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?

MRS. DILBER: No, indeed!

MRS. OLIVER: If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, the wicked old screw, why wasn't he more natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with death...instead of lying, gasping out his last there...all alone...by himself.

MR. TACKLETON: It's the truest word that ever was spoke, Mrs. Oliver. It's a judgment on him.

MRS. OLIVER: I wish it was a little heavier one; and it should have been, you can count on it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Now, open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know it's value to ye. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We knew pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin to see to one's livelihood.

*(MR. TACKLETON steps forward, not to be outdone, and produces his plunder.)*

OLD JOE: Aha! Mr. Tackleton has been a busy man...Let's see, a seal..a pencil-case...a pair of sleeve buttons...hm...I'll give ye one pound eight—and not another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?

*(MRS. DILBER presents her bundle. OLD JOE brings out sheets, towels, a few articles of clothing, some silver.)*

OLD JOE: Ah, quite a stash, Mrs. Dilber!...Of course, I always give too much to the ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin meself. Ha ha! *(all laugh)*. Three pounds even, Mrs. Dilber. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal and knock off half a crown.

MRS. OLIVER: And now undo my bundle, Joe! I was the first.

OLD JOE: Ah, and what do you call this? Bed-curtains!

MRS. OLIVER *(laughing)*: Ah! Bed-curtains! Ha ha!

OLD JOE: You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him a-lying there?

MRS. OLIVER: And why not? He wasn't apt to catch his cold without 'em, I dare say.

OLD JOE: I hope he didn't die of anything catching? Eh?

MRS. DILBER: Don't you be afraid of that.. I wasn't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about if he did! *(they laugh)*

*(OLD JOE pulls out a fine silk shirt.)*

MRS. OLIVER: Ah! You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache, but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one, too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

OLD JOE: And what do you call wasting it?

MRS. OLIVER: Why, putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure!

*(Laughter. OLD JOE figures sums in his head, then opens a money bag filled with coin, and counts out into her hand.)*

OLD JOE: Four pounds, six shillings and twopence—and not a penny more if I was to be boiled for it!

MRS. DILBER: And this is how it ends. He scared every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha ha ha!

SCROOGE: Ghost, this is a fearful place. Surely there can be no reason to bring me to this Godforsaken part of the city, except that the case of this unhappy man might be my own. Yes, the items they have stolen are similar to mine. I see the point. But surely

there is someone who feels some emotion caused by this man's death. Show that person to me, I beg you!

*(GCY turns and points opposite. Lights come up on a family table, where two children are seated. The mother is pacing back and forth. Her husband enters. He is sober but not without hope.)*

CAROLINE: Oh, finally you've come, Thomas. What have you heard? Is it good, or bad?

THOMAS: It is bad, I'm afraid.

CAROLINE: Are we ruined, Thomas? Did he deny you the extra time you asked for? Has he evicted us?

THOMAS: No. There is hope yet, Caroline.

CAROLINE: Only if he repents, that old miser. Nothing is past hope if such a miracle has happened.

THOMAS: He is past repenting, dear. He is dead.

CAROLINE: Dead! Oh, God be praised! Oh!...Lord, forgive me!

THOMAS: What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then..

CAROLINE: To whom will our debt be transferred?

THOMAS: I don't know. But before that time we will be ready with the money. And even if we weren't, it would be bad fortune indeed to find a creditor who was as merciless as he! We may sleep tonight with light hearts, Caroline! *(light change)*

SCROOGE: Ghost! I ask to see some emotion connected with this man's death, and you show me only pleasure. I demand to be shown some tenderness connected with a death!

### SCENE 3: CRATCHIT HOME

*(Sound of wind and thunder. SCROOGE turns to see the Cratchit family table. The children are seated quietly. MRS. CRATCHIT and the older girls are sewing. PETER is reading from the Bible.)*

PETER: "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them. And he said to them, 'Whenever you welcome a little child, you welcome me.'"

MRS. CRATCHIT *(briefly overcome with emotion, setting down her work, endeavoring to recover quickly)*: This color hurts my eyes...There, better now. The candlelight makes them weak, and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home. Not for the world. It must be near his time.

PETER: Past it, rather. But I think he's walked a little slower than he used to, these last few evenings, Mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Yes..I've known him to walk with...I have known him to walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

PETER: And so have I.

MRS. CRATCHIT: But he was very light to carry. And his father loved him so, that it was no trouble, no trouble at all. *(listening)* Is that your father, now?

*(She stands to greet CRATCHIT as he enters. They all greet him. He sits, child on a knee.)*

CRATCHIT: I went by there today, is why I'm late. I wish you could have been there. It would have done you good to see how green it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child... My little child!

*(he recovers; hugs from the children)*

CRATCHIT: But guess whom I saw today? Scrooge's nephew, Mr. Fred. I met him on the street. He saw that I was a little down, and, well, he is the most pleasant-speaking man you ever heard, and so I was not afraid to tell him. And this is what he said to me: 'I am heartily sorry, Mr. Cratchit, heartily sorry, and heartily sorry for your good wife.' By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Knew what, my dear?

CRATCHIT: Why, that you were a good wife.

PETER: Everybody knows that!

CRATCHIT: Very well observed, my boy! I hope they do. 'Heartily sorry,' he said, 'for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,' he said, giving me his card, 'that's where I live. Pray come to me.' Now, it wasn't," cried Bob, "for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.

MRS. CRATCHIT: I'm sure he's a good soul!

CRATCHIT: And I've got news for you, Peter!

PETER: What is it, Father?

CRATCHIT: He told me that he has been able to secure an apprenticeship for you. You'll begin at eight shillings a week, starting Tuesday next!

PETER: Eight shillings a week!

MARTHA: Soon you will be keeping company with a young lady, Peter, and setting up house for yourself! *(laughter and teasing)*

CRATCHIT: That will happen soon enough. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or this first parting that there was among us? And I know, I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

ALL: No! Never, Father!

*(Hugs all around, and PETER proudly steps up to shake his father's hand. Lights down on the scene, leaving SCROOGE and GCY.)*

#### SCENE 4: GRAVEYARD

SCROOGE: Specter, something tells me that the moment of our parting is at hand. I know it but I don't know how. Tell me, the man who was spoken of, the one who died, tell me who he was.

*(GCY points opposite—where lights come up on a graveyard scene. SCROOGE is hesitant, loathe to go.)*

SCROOGE *(nervous and afraid)*: Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that will be, or are they the shadows of things that may be, only?

*(GCY points to the gravestone.)*

SCROOGE *(desperate)*: The course of a man's life, if persevered in, will determine certain ends; I accept it. But if he departs from those courses, the ends must change. Say it is so with what you show me!

*(GCY continues pointing. SCROOGE creeps toward the stone, trembling. Seeing the name inscribed there, he falls to his knees.)*

SCROOGE: No, no, it can't be! Am I that man?! Am I the man who died whom no one mourned? Say it isn't so, Ghost! Say it isn't so!

*(GCY points to SCROOGE and back to the stone.)*

SCROOGE *(crying now)*: Ghost! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for your intervention. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?

*(GCY hand begins to shake.)*

SCROOGE: Surely your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I may yet change these shadows you have shown me, by a changed life!

*(GCY hand continues to tremble.)*

SCROOGE: I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will remember the lessons of the Past; I will live in the Present; I will live toward the Future. The Ghosts of all three will strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

*(SCROOGE grasps the GCY'S hand, grabs at the robe, pleading, crying, pulling the figure down into a pile of black as he pleads, as light dims to black.)*

## SCENE 5: THE BEDROOM

*(We hear CAROLERS off stage with "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" as lights come up on SCROOGE'S bedroom, as before. He is "waking" from a sob. Lights up. The chimes are tolling EIGHT.)*

SCROOGE: Wha...? Where am I? Wait...what day is this? It's morning, but what day? How long have I been with the Ghosts? I don't know. *(pinching himself)* But I'm alive. I'm alive! *(grasping the bed curtains)* They are still here! They're not torn down. They are here. I am here! Woo-hoo! *(jumping on the bed like a boy)* I don't know what to do! I feel light as a feather. I'm happy as an angel! I'm as merry as a school-boy! I am as giddy as a drunken man!

*(He runs to his window, looking out. A boy appears.)*

SCROOGE: Hallo! You, boy! What day is it?

*(BOY, seeing SCROOGE, makes to turn and run)*

SCROOGE: Wait, don't be afraid my boy! What day is it?

BOY: What day is it?

SCROOGE: Ha ha ha! Yes! What day is it today?

BOY: Why, it's Christmas Day!

SCROOGE: Christmas Day! Are you quite sure, my good fellow?

BOY: I should say I am.

SCROOGE: Then the Ghosts have done it all in one night. Why, of course, they can do anything they like! Of course they can. Ha ha! Hallo, my fine fellow!

BOY: Hallo!

SCROOGE: Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?

BOY: I should hope I did.

SCROOGE: What a wonderful boy. A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there?

BOY: What, the one as big as me?

SCROOGE: What a delightful boy! A pleasure talking with him. Yes, my buck, the one as big as you!

BOY: It's hanging there now.

SCROOGE: It is? Why, then you must go and buy it. Yes, go and buy it now.

BOY (*looking around*): Police!

SCROOGE: Oh, no, no. I really do mean it. Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it 'round, so that I can give them directions where to deliver it. Come back with the man and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I'll give you half a crown!

(*BOY turns and is off like a shot.*)

SCROOGE: Ha ha ha! (*beginning to dress*) I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's! He won't know who sent it. I won't tell him! Ha ha! It's twice the size of Tiny Tim! Oh...Tiny Tim...Tiny Tim will live. On my soul, Tiny Tim will live!...They did it all in one night!... (*on his knees*) Oh, heaven and Christmas Time be praised for this! (*jumping up*) A Merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Ha ha ha!

## SCENE 6: OUTDOORS

*(SCROOGE is dressed. BOY returns with POULTERER.)*

BOY: Hallo!

SCROOGE: Ah! Here's the Turkey! Hallo! How are you, my boy! I was right, ha ha, this turkey is twice the size of Tiny Tim! It's twice the size of you, my lad! *(to the poulterer, who is looking a bit dubious)* Merry Christmas, my fine fellow!

POULTERER: Merry Christmas, sir.

SCROOGE: Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town. You must have a cab, sir!

POULTERER: Camden Town, sir?

SCROOGE: Yes! This splendid turkey is to be delivered immediately to the home of Bob Cratchit and family, in Camden Town. Here, I've written the directions down. And here is the money for the Turkey!

POULTERER: Thank you, sir.

SCROOGE: And here is the money for the delivery!

POULTERER: Thank you, sir.

SCROOGE: And here is a tip for you, sir!

POULTERER *(smiling by now)*: Thank you, sir!

SCROOGE: And here is half a crown, for you, my boy! Well-deserved. Yes, well deserved!

BOY: Thank you, sir!

*(BOY and POULTERER run off.)*

SCROOGE: And a very Merry Christmas!

POULTERER and BOY: Merry Christmas!

*(MR. JEEVES and MR. HOWELL enter R, quietly chatting. SCROOGE turns, sees them, hurries to them.)*

SCROOGE: My dear sir *(taking JEEVES by both hands)* How do you do? I hope you did well yesterday. It was a very good thing to do. A very good thing.

JEEVES (incredulous): Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Yes. That is my name. I fear it isn't pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your forgiveness. And yours, too, sir!

HOWELL: Yes, sir.

SCROOGE: And will you have the goodness—(SCROOGE whispers in HOWELL'S ear)

HOWELL: Lord, bless me! My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you quite serious?

SCROOGE: If you please. Not a penny less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favor?

HOWELL: My dear sir, I don't know what to say to such generos...

SCROOGE: Don't say anything, please. Come and see me sometime! Will you come and see me, both of you?

JEEVES & HOWELL: We will! We will!

SCROOGE: Thank'ee. I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you both, and a Merry Christmas!

*(SCROOGE, JEEVES, and HOWELL exit. Light change.)*

## SCENE 7: FRED'S HOME

NARRATION: Scrooge walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head as they passed, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure.

NARRATION: He had never dreamed that any walk, that anything at all, could give him so much happiness.

NARRATION: In the afternoon, he turned his steps toward his nephew's house.

*(Lights up on FRED'S home.)*

JANET: Oh, Fred. It's beautiful! And it's too much. You shouldn't have spent so much!

FRED: But I love you, my dear, and my wife shall have the best on Christmas Day.

JANET: Oh, Fred. I love you so...but not just for this!

FRED: I know, my dear! I know. *(they embrace)*

*(There is a knock.)*

JANET: Now who can that be?

FRED: I don't know. No one's expected at this hour.

*(FRED answers door off. He reappears, walking backward, with SCROOGE.)*

SCROOGE: Hello, Fred!

*(JANET gasps.)*

FRED: Uncle Scrooge!

SCROOGE: The very same! It is I, your Uncle Scrooge. I recall an invitation you made to me yesterday, to come and dine with you. If that invitation is still in force, I should like to accept.

FRED *(with a look at JANET)*: Why, I don't know what to say!

SCROOGE: Well, you could say bah-humbug—a retort I heartily repent of and shall never use again—or, you could say, Come in!

FRED: Come in? Why, of course! Of course you shall come in! Hoorah! Uncle Scrooge, you have made us both very happy! Oh, may I introduce my wife, Janet? Janet, my Uncle Scrooge.

SCROOGE (*approaching her, taking her hand*): My dear (*kissing it*). It is plain to me now why my nephew chose you among women. You are indeed every bit as lovely as I have heard.

JANET: Why, thank you...Uncle Scrooge. We are very happy you are here!

SCROOGE (*turning to FRED*): I am sorry for the poor reception I gave you yesterday, of which you were so undeserving. I see the image of my sister in your face. I loved her, you know. And she, you.

FRED: I know it, Uncle Scrooge. She loved you very much, and wished until her dying day that we should always be close.

SCROOGE: And so we are, Fred, and so we shall be. So we shall be.

*(Light change.)*

## SCENE 8: THE COUNTING HOUSE

*(Lights up. We are back in SCROOGE'S counting-house. It is the day after Christmas. SCROOGE is sitting at his desk with a mischievous smile on his face, humming to himself as he works. CRATCHIT enters.)*

SCROOGE (looking up with a feigned scowl and growl): What is this?

CRATCHIT: Morning, sir.

SCROOGE: Mr. Cratchit, you are late, sir.

CRATCHIT: Yes, sir.

SCROOGE: What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

CRATCHIT (*terrified*): I am very sorry, sir. I am behind my time.

SCROOGE (*alighting from his desk*): Step this way, if you please, Cratchit.

*(They meet at CRATCHIT'S desk.)*

CRATCHIT: It's only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, with my family.

SCROOGE: Now, I'll tell you what, my friend. I am not going to stand for this any longer. And therefore...and therefore...

*(From behind his back he produces a leather bag full of coins)*

SCROOGE: And therefore...I am going to double your salary! *(throws the bag on the desk and crunches CRATCHIT in a magnificent embrace)* Yes, Bob Cratchit! Ha ha ha! I am going to double your salary, sir. A Merry Christmas to you! A merrier Christmas than I have given you for many a year! And from now on I will endeavor to assist your family in any way I can...And as for Tiny Tim, he will walk again. I know it! Now, you needn't say a thing. Come with me. We will discuss the particulars over a bowl of smoking bishop before you so much as dot another i,

*(SCROOGE and CRATCHIT exit. Lights up on stage. NARRATORS appear.)*

NARRATION: Scrooge was better than his word.

NARRATION: He did it all, and infinitely more.

NARRATION: And to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father.

*(SCROOGE appears with TINY TIM in hand, who is walking without his crutch; and the CRATCHIT family following.)*

NARRATION: He became as good a friend,

CRATCHIT: as good a master,

NARRATION: and as good a man, as the good old city knew.

*(SCROOGE and CRATCHIT'S center stage.)*

GCPAST: And ever afterward it was always said of Ebenezer Scrooge that he knew how to keep Christmas, and keep it well,

MARLEY: if any man alive possessed the knowledge.

ALL (in unison) May that be truly said of us, and all of us!

GCPRESENT: And so, as Tiny Tim observed...

TINY TIM: God bless us, Everyone.

*(CAROLERS appear singing WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS. The entire cast joins in encouraging the audience to sing along.)*

*We wish you a merry Christmas*

*We wish you a merry Christmas*

*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

*Good tidings we bring to you and your kin*

*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

*Oh, bring us some figgy pudding*

*Oh, bring us some figgy pudding*

*Oh, bring us some figgy pudding*

*And bring it right here*

*Good tidings we bring to you and your kin*

*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

*We won't go until we get some*

*We won't go until we get some*

*We won't go until we get some*

*So bring it right here*

*Good tidings we bring to you and your kin*

*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

*We all like our figgy pudding*

*We all like our figgy pudding*

*We all like our figgy pudding*

*With all its good cheers*

*Good tidings we bring to you and your kin*

*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

*We wish you a merry Christmas*

*We wish you a merry Christmas*

*We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year*

ALL: GOD BLESS US, EVERYONE!

**THE END**