

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens!

Every Man Has the Power to do Good

A Play in Two Acts

Adapted for the Stage by James Hutchison

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A Christmas Carol – Every Man Has the Power to do Good
A Play in Two Acts by James Hutchison

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What the Dickens!

Even Scrooge Was Given a Second Chance

Two Act Comedy, 6M 3F, Multiple Sets, 100 minutes

Marty Fisher has doubts and fears about getting married and staying in Pine Ridge with his fiancée Tami Cooper and so he's been focusing on directing the Pine Tree Players Production of *A Christmas Carol* instead of helping his fiancée plan their wedding. On opening night when his Uncle, who's playing Scrooge, turns up drunk, half the cast gets food poisoning, and Marty gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha both the production and Marty's relationship with Tami are on thin ice. As the curtain rises and the show lurches forward Marty will do all he can to save his show while trying to salvage his relationship with Tami.

Death and the Psychiatrist

Even Death Could Use a Friend

One Act Comedy, 2M 1F, Single Set, 45 minutes

When Mortimer Graves shows up at Psychiatrist Dr. Donna Thompson's office claiming to be the Grim Reaper the good Doctor simply assumes that Mortimer is under the delusion that he is death. Although Mortimer says he is there to escort Dr. Thompson to the other side, Dr. Thompson convinces Mortimer that he should go into therapy in order to help him deal with his loneliness and emotional issues. With the Doctor's help Mortimer confronts his emotional issues and Doctor Thompson, with Mortimer's help, reevaluates her life priorities.

500 bucks and a pack of smokes

How much is your life worth?

One Act Comedy, 2M 1F, 8 Characters, Three Sets, 50 minutes

After being told by his doctor that he's dying Donny Bracco put out a contract out on his own life. So, when his Doctor calls him on his birthday and tells him the lab made a mistake, Donny is more than a little upset. Making matters worse, the original killer Donny hired, subcontracted the hit to another killer – who subcontracted it to another killer – who subcontracted it to another killer – who doesn't know Donny is the one who put the hit out on himself. With time running out, Donny has to find the killer and convince him to call off the hit, otherwise this might be the last birthday he ever celebrates.

CAST of CHARACTERS

Ebenezer Scrooge	A bitter old miser
Mr. Bentley	A business associate
Bob Cratchit	Scrooge's Clerk
Fred	Scrooge's Nephew
Mr. Granger	A philanthropist
Mr. Harrington	A client of Scrooge's
Mr. Murdock	Mr. Bentley's accountant
Boy	A poor boy
Man	A Gentleman
Woman	A Lady
Mrs. Dilber	Scrooge's cleaning lady
Ghost of Jacob Marley	Scrooge's business partner
First Spirit	Ghost of Christmas past
William Turner	Boyhood friend of Scrooge's
Simon Hardcastle	Boyhood friend of Scrooge's
Charlie Campbell	Boyhood friend of Scrooge's
Headmaster	The Headmaster at Scrooge's school
Scrooge as a young boy	A nice quiet boy
Scrooge as a young man	Scrooge was a different man
Fan	Scrooge's sister
Mr. Fezziwig	Scrooge's old boss
Mrs. Fezziwig	Fezziwig's wife
Fezziwig daughter	The oldest Fezziwig daughter
Fezziwig daughter	The middle Fezziwig daughter
Fezziwig daughter	The youngest Fezziwig daughter
Jacob Marley	Scrooge's business partner
Fiddler	Fiddler at Fezziwig party
Belle	Scrooge's Fiancée
Dick Wilkens	Belle's husband
Hugh	Belle & Dick's 1 st child
George	Belle & Dick's 2 nd child
Alice	Belle & Dick's 3 rd child
Grace	Belle & Dick's 4 th child
Tabatha	Belle & Dick's oldest child
Second Spirit	Ghost of Christmas present
Mrs. Cratchit	Bob Cratchit's wife
Belinda Cratchit	2 nd oldest Cratchit daughter
Peter Cratchit	Oldest Cratchit son

Justin Cratchit	Youngest Cratchit Son
Abigail Cratchit	Youngest Cratchit daughter
Martha Cratchit	Oldest Cratchit daughter
Tiny Tim Cratchit	Second youngest Cratchit son
Emma	Fred's wife
Topper	Friend of Fred and Emma's
Cousin Herb	Fred's cousin
Rose	Emma's sister
Ignorance	A scrawny boy
Greed	A scrawny girl
Third Spirit	Ghost of Christmas future
First Man	Business Man
Second Man	Business Man
Third Man	Business Man
Mr. Newbury	The undertaker
Old Joe	Receiver of stolen goods
Thomas	A young man
Caroline	Thomas's wife
Boy	Boy in the Street on Christmas morning
Various Town-folk	As many as needed to set the scenes

You can break down the casting according to the talents and availability of actors for your production. For example Mr. Granger, Fezziwig, and the Ghost of Christmas Present and some other minor characters could all be played by the same actor. The genders of certain characters, spirits, and children is flexible as is the total number of Fezziwig daughters or the number of business men.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL – ACT I

Scene i:	A London Street
Scene ii:	Scrooge & Marley's
Scene iii:	Scrooge's Street and Front Door
Scene iv:	Scrooge's Bed Chamber
Scene v:	Scrooge's School & Classroom
Scene vi:	Fezziwig's Warehouse
Scene vii:	Scrooge & Marley's
Scene viii:	Belle's home

A CHRISTMAS CAROL – ACT II

Scene i:	A London Street
Scene ii:	Bob Cratchit's Home
Scene iii:	Fred's Home
Scene iv:	Mr. Bentley's Place of Business
Scene v:	London Business District
Scene vi:	Old Joe's
Scene vii:	The Undertakers
Scene viii:	Thomas and Caroline's Home
Scene ix:	Bob Cratchit's Home
Scene x:	Church Yard
Scene xi:	Scrooge's Bed Chamber
Scene xii:	A London Street
Scene xiii:	Fred's Home
Scene xiv:	Scrooge & Marley's

TIME

Christmas Eve Long Ago in Victorian England

STORY of the PLAY

In this fresh, fun and lively adaptation of A Christmas Carol you'll meet Mr. Bentley, learn about the letters Scrooge wrote to his sister Fan, and find out who Mr. Newbury is. You'll still find all the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future along with Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchit, the Ghost of Jacob Marley, Old Fezziwig, Scrooge's nephew Fred, and the love of Scrooge's life, Belle. There are some new scary bits, a few good laughs, a tender moment or two, and some surprises! It's a fresh take on an old tale sure to thrill young and old alike.

For Ann Louise

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

ACT I

SCENE i: A LONDON STREET

Setting: A busy London Street with people rushing about the day before Christmas.

At Rise: Couples stroll along looking at the shops. Kids play in the street. CAROLERS sing DECK THE HALLS. Friends and strangers greet each other happily. FRED walks through the crowd greeting people and enjoying the season.

CAROLLERS

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.

FRED breaks away from the crowd and addresses the audience.

FRED

I love Christmas – there’s a spirit in the air. It is a time of joy and celebration. It is a time when people are more kind and more considerate.

Well, most people, that is. There are those who see Christmas as a waste of time and energy and my Uncle Scrooge was not only a member of that tribe but in all likelihood their loudest cheerleader and most ardent supporter. He hated Christmas. He hated anything that did not make him richer and so he hated Christmas most of all.

FRED stands outside SCROOGE’s Counting House and an old sign very much in need of repair with the names Scrooge & Marley hangs out front.

And on this particular Christmas when I dropped in to see him he was in a particularly foul mood. Maybe it was because seven years ago this very night his business partner,

and only friend in the world, Jacob Marley had died. Marley was long dead and buried. This you must remember or nothing wonderful can come of the tale you are about to see.

And so, on a crisp and chilly – Christmas Eve my Uncle Scrooge, that tight fisted, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner was – can you believe it – conducting business in his counting house!

End Scene

SCENE ii: SCROOGE & MARLEY'S

SCROOGE and MR. BENTLY are concluding some business while MR. GRANGER and BOB CRATCHIT wait.

SCROOGE

One hundred pounds a-piece. My word, a fair profit, I dare say, wouldn't you Mr. Bentley.

MR. BENTLEY

A nice tidy sum to add to a record year, Mr. Scrooge.

MR. SCROOGE

Yes, yes, yes indeed. And to add to our success I have some other business deals I would like to propose.

MR. BENTLEY

I've no doubt they will prove as profitable as our last enterprise.

MR. SCROOGE

Without a doubt, sir. Without a doubt!

MR. BENTLY

Excellent.

MR. SCROOGE

Shall we discuss them at length?

MR. BENTLEY

Nothing would please me more, Mr. Scrooge, unfortunately, I have some urgent business across town, but I am available tomorrow.

SCROOGE

On Christmas Day?

MR. BENTLEY

Most certainly on Christmas Day. It is a day like any other as far as I'm concerned, why should it be absent of work.

SCROOGE

My feelings precisely Mr. Bentley. Ha ha! I sense we are kindred spirits when it comes to business. Until tomorrow then. Good day. Cheerio!

MR. BENTLY

Good day, Mr. Scrooge.

MR. BENTLY exits.

BOB

Um, Mr. Scrooge, there's a Mr. Granger here to see you sir.

SCROOGE

Well show him in we mustn't keep clients waiting.

BOB

This way sir.

MR. GRANGER

Good afternoon Mr. Scrooge, and Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE

How do you do Mr. Granger. I understand you have some business to propose.

MR. GRANGER

The business of charity sir.

SCROOGE

Ah, charity, I see. Did you know about this Mr. Cratchit.

MR. CRATCHIT

I'm sorry sir, he said he had some business to discuss.

MR. GRANGER

Yes, Mr. Scrooge. Charity is everyone's business, and so at this festive time of the year a few of us are raising a fund to help the poor and destitute – who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE

Are they indeed, oh my, are there no prisons?

MR. GRANGER

Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE

And the Union workhouses, are they still in operation?

MR. GRANGER

They are – although, I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE

And the Treadmill and the Poor Law are still in full vigour, then?

MR. GRANGER

Both very busy, sir.

SCROOGE

Oh! Thank God, I am very glad and relieved to hear it. I was afraid, from what you had said, that something had happened to stop them in their useful work. Good day sir.

MR. GRANGER

Um, but Mr. Scrooge, those institutions scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude. And so, a few of us are collecting money to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth. We choose this time of year, because it is a time, above all others, when want is most keenly felt, and abundance rejoiced! What may I put you down for?

SCROOGE

You may put me down for nothing.

MR. GRANGER

Nothing?

SCROOGE

I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I certainly can't afford to make idle people merry. I help support the establishments I have mentioned – they cost far more than enough and those who are in need must go there.

GRANGER

But, many can't go there, and many would rather die.

SCROOGE

Well then let them die and thereby decrease the surplus population.

GRANGER

Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE

Mr. Granger! It is not my business what happens to these people. Why should I care about them? I dare say, they care little for me. It is enough for a man to understand his own business and not to interfere in other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, sir, good day!

GRANGER

But Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Good day.

BOB shows MR. GRANGER to the door and returns to his desk.

FRED enters and cheerfully greets his UNCLE SCROOGE.

FRED

A Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

FRED

Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure.

SCROOGE

I most certainly do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be so merry? You're poor enough.

FRED

Come now, what right have you to be so miserable? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE

What else can I be when I live in a world of fools such as this. Merry Christmas! If I had my way every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas on his lips would be boiled in his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!

FRED

Uncle!

SCROOGE

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

FRED

But you don't keep it.

SCROOGE

Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!

FRED

But Uncle I have always thought of Christmas time as a kind, forgiving, charitable time. It is the one time of the year, when men and women open their hearts and think of all people as fellow passengers to the grave, and not as another race of creatures bound on different journeys. And therefore, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

BOB applauds.

BOB

Well said, I must say.

SCROOGE

Oh, you agree with my nephew do you Mr. Cratchit?

BOB

I do, sir. I think Christmas is a joyous time.

SCROOGE

Do you? Well you let me hear another word from you Mr. Bob Cratchit and you'll spend your Christmas looking for another job. Is that understood?

BOB

Yes, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I am most impressed. It's a wonder you don't go into politics. Run for office. Become a Member of Parliament.

FRED

What a good idea. I just might do that, can I count on your vote, Uncle?

SCROOGE

Bah!

FRED

Oh, Uncle, don't be angry. Come, dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE

No, thank you.

FRED

But why not?

SCROOGE

A man's first priority is to secure his financial future. You should have never gotten married. Why did you?

FRED

Why did...I...get...well...because, I fell in love.

SCROOGE

Because you fell in love! What nonsense. Bah, good afternoon.

Pause

FRED

Have you never been in love Uncle?

SCROOGE

No, I have not.

FRED

No?

SCROOGE

No. Have you come here for the sole purpose of keeping me from my work?

FRED

Not at all. I have come here, because I have something that belongs to you.

SCROOGE

Do you?

FRED removes a bundle of letters from his pocket.

SCROOGE

What are those?

FRED

Letters.

SCROOGE

Letters?

FRED

Yes, Uncle. Letters. I was going through an old trunk of my mother's and I came across some letters you wrote to her when you were a much younger man and those letters are from a very different Uncle Scrooge than the person who sits before me now.

SCROOGE

You read them?

FRED

I might have read one or two...maybe three. Can you blame me?

SCROOGE

How dare you! Those were private letters between your mother and I. You had no right to read them. Now hand them over.

FRED

I'm sorry if I've upset you Uncle, that was not my intention. I thought you'd be pleased to get them back. Here, let me make it up to you. Come have dinner with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE

No thank you. Now give me those letters.

FRED

Not until you agree to come to dinner.

SCROOGE

Bah, you were always an obstinate child.

FRED

Stubborn like my Uncle Scrooge my dad used to say. Well, if you won't have dinner with us, Uncle, how about you Bob? How about you and your fine family join us for Christmas?

BOB

Oh! Ha, ha that's very kind of you sir, and most unexpected but I'm afraid I'm scheduled to work.

FRED

Good Lord, on Christmas! That is a humbug. What mean spirited old moneygrubber would make you work on Christmas day I wonder?

SCROOGE

If I was to stop him half-a-crown for it, you'd think him ill-used. And yet you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

BOB

But Mr. Scrooge, it's only once a year.

SCROOGE & FRED

That's a poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!

SCROOGE

Bah! I am surrounded by fools! Very well, if you must have it, have it!

BOB

Oh, thank you sir. Thank you very much.

FRED

Excellent! Well then, I take it that means you're free to come dine with us Uncle?

SCROOGE

No, no, no. Mr. Cratchit may have his day to do with as he intends. I will use my day for more profitable enterprises.

FRED

I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas cheer to the last. So, a Merry Christmas, uncle!

FRED puts the letters on SCROOGE's desk.

SCROOGE

Good afternoon!

FRED

And a Happy New Year!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon!

FRED turns to leave.

FRED

And a Merry Christmas Bob, to you and your family.

BOB

Thank you, sir. Same to yours.

FRED

And my invitation to Christmas dinner stands. You are welcome to join us.

BOB

Oh, that's most kind of you sir – and it is very much appreciated – but we like to celebrate at home and have the whole family together on Christmas day.

FRED

There's nothing more important than family, is there Bob.

BOB

No sir, nothing.

FRED

Merry Christmas.

BOB

Merry Christmas, sir.

FRED

Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE growls and then goes back to working at his desk. The day grows darker and colder. The letters sit where FRED put them.

SCROOGE stops his work and picks up the letters. They are bound by a ribbon. As SCROOGE unties the bundle, he hears a whisper.

MARLEY's GHOST (Off)

Ghostly whisper

Scrooge.

SCROOGE stops and looks up. He looks about warily and then dismisses the sound and returns to the letters.

MARLEY's GHOST (Off)

Ghostly whisper

Scrooge.

SCROOGE looks up. Then after a moment.

SCROOGE

Mr. Cratchit, did you call?

BOB

Call, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Yes, call just now – my name.

BOB

No, Mr. Scrooge. Is there something you want?

SCROOGE hesitates – listens – then dismisses the sound.

SCROOGE

No, no...no...nothing.

SFX: A DISTANT CHURCH CLOCK BEGINS TO CHIME SEVEN

BOB begins to pack up his desk as the hour of closing is reached.

SCROOGE

Well, Mr. Cratchit, you have tomorrow to do with as you like, but I expect you here at your desk all the earlier the following morning. Is that clear?

BOB

Quite clear sir. Thank you, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Mark my word Mr. Cratchit, this is a harsh and cruel world where your only shield against the cold hand of poverty is acquisition, profit, and gain. What's Christmas time to you but a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer? Bah.

BOB

Yes, sir. Good night, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Good day.

BOB exits the counting house and once outside whistles a happy tune and laughs as he rushes off to be with his family.

SCROOGE opens one of the letters and begins to read.

MARLEY'S GHOST (Off)

Ghostly whisper

Scrooge.

SCROOGE

What's that? Hello? Is someone there?

SFX: CHAINS BEING DRAGGED

MARLEY'S GHOST (Off)

Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Whoever's there I'm warning you – I am armed. Yes, yes, I am armed. So you had better show yourself. Come on – out from the shadows whoever you are.

SFX KNOCK AT THE DOOR

The ghostly sounds fade away.

SFX KNOCK AT THE DOOR

SCROOGE crosses to the door and opens it.

MR. HARRINGTON

Ah, Mr. Scrooge, I am so sorry to disturb you on Christmas Eve, but I know how long are the hours you work, and took the chance that I might find you here still – at your office – at this late hour.

SCROOGE

What trick are you up to?

MR. HARRINGTON

Trick, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Yes, what game are you playing at?

MR. HARRINGTON

Um, I'm playing no game, I assure you sir. Is something wrong?

Pause

SCROOGE

Uhhh, no. No, nothing's wrong.

SCROOGE tosses the letters into the trash.

SCROOGE

Well then Mr. Harrington I assume you are here to make a payment?

MR. HARRINGTON

Ah, yes well, I've run into a bit of a problem – you see – and I need to make some sort of arrangement for an extension Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

The terms of the loan were quite clear when you signed them.

MR. HARRINGTON

Yes, of course, sir, but it's not easy finding work at the moment you see and if I could just have a little more time...I'm good for it...I'm a hard worker...

SCROOGE

None of this is my concern Mr. Harrington. If you are unable to pay off your loan you must pay the penalty and do so in a timely fashion or forfeit the collateral you have offered or find yourself in debtor's prison. There is no court in the land that will not rule in my favour.

MR. HARRINGTON

Maybe so sir, but that doesn't make it right.

SCROOGE

I have a right to be paid the money owed me.

MR. HARRINGTON

But Mr. Scrooge I'm sure you've seen tough times yourself and have needed a helping hand from time to time.

SCROOGE

God helps those who help themselves. Good night Mr. Harrington. A full payment is due by the end of the year.

MR. HARRINGTON

Were you always so cold and unfeeling a man, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

You may find me cold and unfeeling sir, but I would venture to say I am a man of my word; a man whose word carries weight; a man whose word allows him the ability to strike a deal and back it up with his signature. My signature is worth something. Yours it would appear – if you continue to treat your financial obligations and business dealings in this manner – will soon be worthless. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to the Nags Head Pub for a well-earned and well-deserved supper. Good day, sir!

HARRINGTON exits

SCROOGE puts on his coat and hat; looks about the office and leaves.

The letters that were thrown in the dustbin rise out of the bin and stack themselves neatly on SCROOGE's desk.

End Scene

SCENE iii: SCROOGE'S STREET AND THE FRONT DOOR

It is late and cold. Fog circles the street. A YOUNG BOY stands near the door to Scrooge's apartments singing. A GENTLEMAN and a LADY drop a coin into the boy's cup as they pass. SCROOGE enters from the other end of the street and approaches the boy.

BOY

The closer SCROOGE gets the more the BOY falters until the song fades away to nothing.

GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN
LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY
REMEMBER, CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR
WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY.
TO SAVE US ALL FROM SATAN'S POWER
WHEN WE WERE ALL GONE ASTRAY
O TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY
COMFORT AND JOY
O TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY

SCROOGE

What are you doing on my doorstep, boy?

BOY

Singing, sir.

SCROOGE

Singing.

BOY

Yes, sir. You wouldn't happen to have any change, would you sir, for a poor boy just trying to make a few bob?

SCROOGE

Singing, is not something I wish to pay for. Now get out of here before I call a constable. Go on. Hurry up. Go sing somewhere else – not here. Not at my door. You want money, then you should earn it. Go work in the coal mines and find yourself some other porch to haunt.

SCROOGE watches the boy run off and then digs in his pocket for a key. HE puts the key in the lock as the face of the door knocker changes from a Lion to the face of his long dead partner JACOB MARLEY

MARLEY'S GHOST

Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Ohhaahhh!

SCROOGE backs away startled. The door returns to normal and slowly swings open. Fog from inside the dwelling mingles with the fog on the street.

SCROOGE

Hello? Is there someone there? Hello?

MRS. DILBER enters from inside and steps out onto the street.

MRS. DILBER

Oh, Mr. Scrooge. I was just leaving. You are running rather late tonight – even for you sir. And I do have me own family to think of – and what with tomorrow be'n Christmas and all there's a lot of work needs doing. Now I know Christmas means little to you sir, but we mothers and wives, find ourselves occupied with much preparation for the day.

SCROOGE

Yes, yes, yes. We all busy ourselves with what we think is important, Mrs. Dilber.

MRS. DILBER

Now, I've left your gruel by the fire, Mr. Scrooge, and put a cover on it to keep it warm and I've put the bed warmer in the bed. It's a cold night. Cold to the bones. The only people who don't feel this cold are the dead I reckon. Ha, ha, ha.

SCROOGE

Yes...uh...Mrs. Dilber?

MRS. DILBER

Yes, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Have you noticed anything peculiar?

MRS. DILBER

Peculiar? In what way?

SCROOGE

No strange noises, perhaps?

MRS. DILBER

No stranger than usual. This old place creaks and groans like an old man.

SCROOGE

Everything is quite normal, then?

MRS. DILBER

Everything is as it should be, Mr. Scrooge. Why, is there something wrong?

SCROOGE

No, no...it's just I thought for a moment...that...ah...oh, I have been surrounded by such fools this entire day that their silly nonsense and talk of Christmas has me hearing and seeing things. Good night Mrs. Dilber.

MRS. DILBER

Good night Mr. Scrooge. Will you be taking breakfast at your usual time tomorrow?

SCROOGE

I see no reason why I should adjust my schedule.

MRS. DILBER

Ah, very well Mr. Scrooge, I will see you first thing in the morning.

SCROOGE enters his house.

MRS. DILBER starts to exit. She looks about her. The GHOSTLY shadow of JACOB MARLEY moves across the exterior of the house. MRS. DILBER looks about and then hurries off.

End Scene

SCENE iv: SCROOGE’S BED CHAMBER

There is a small fire in the fireplace and beside the fire is a high back chair. The four poster bed dominates the room. A floor length mirror stands beside the valet. SCROOGE sits in the chair wearing his slippers, nightshirt and cap. He holds the bowl of gruel in his hands.

SCROOGE

Such, nonsense. Christmas – a kind, hospitable, charitable time. Humbug, I say. It’s all humbug.

SCROOGE goes to take a spoonful of gruel and blows on it. He is about to eat the gruel when he hears MARLEY’S GHOST.

MARLEY’S GHOST (Off)

Scrooge.

SCROOGE drops his spoon into the bowl.

SFX HEAVY FOOTSTEPS AND THE SOUND OF CHAINS BEING DRAGGED OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM DOOR WITH LAMENTED AND MOANING CRIES.

SCROOGE

What’s this? No. This is a humbug I say! A humbug!

SCROOGE shaking with fear rushes to the door and double bolts all the locks.

SFX: SOUND OF CHAINS BEING DRAGGED ACROSS THE FLOOR

SCROOGE

Ha, there! Not even Hannibal and his Elephants could break down this door! You hear me? Hey! I advise you to leave this place at once – whoever you are.

MARLEY’S GHOST (Off)

Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Leave now before I shout for the law and have you arrested! You hear me? You'll spend your Christmas in a jail cell if I have anything to say about it!

As SCROOGE stands at the door, the Ghost of JACOB MARLEY ghostly white and bound by a long chain made of cash boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel, emerges from the mirror behind SCROOGE and steps into the room. SCROOGE turns and sees the PHANTOM.

MARLEY'S GHOST

OhhhAhhhOhhhAhhh!

SCROOGE

Oh, dear God! Merciful heaven what is this?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Whooooaaahhhh.

SCROOGE

Answer me dreadful phantom, who and what are you?

MARLEY'S GHOST

In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE

Jacob? No. No, it cannot be. You are dead and long buried. Long buried.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Do you not believe in me?

SCROOGE

No, I do not.

MARLEY'S GHOST

You doubt your own eyes and ears?

SCROOGE

I do. Yes I do. In this matter they are not to be trusted. You may be nothing more than an undigested bit of beef...yes...a glob of mustard, a chunk of cheese, a fragment of an

underdone potato. I say you are nothing more than an upset stomach making me hear and see things that do not exist. Mark my word, you unholy vision, there's more of gravy than of grave about you, ha, whatever you are!

MARLEY's GHOST lets out a horrible cry. His chains move forward and wrap themselves around SCROOGE and draw SCROOGE towards him.

SCROOGE

No. No. No. Mercy, dreadful phantom! Please release me.

MARLEY's GHOST

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

SCROOGE

I do. I don't know. I do. I do – yes I do – I suppose – I must – believe in you. Please have mercy Jacob. Why do you walk the earth, and haunt me?

MARLEY's GHOST

It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk among his fellow men and if that spirit does not do so in life – it is doomed to do so after death.

SCROOGE

After death?

MARLEY's GHOST

Yes, and to wander the world without rest and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared in life, and turned to happiness!

SCROOGE

But why are you shackled? Who has done this to horrible thing to you?

MARLEY's GHOST

I have done it to myself. I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard. The weight and length of the chain you bear yourself was as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. Your's is a monstrous chain!

MARLEY's chain releases SCROOGE

SCROOGE

Oh no...no...Jacob...say it is not so...you have done no wrong...you were always a good man of business.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business. Charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business.

MARLEY'S GHOST shakes his chains. SCROOGE cowers.

SCROOGE

Have mercy, Jacob, please.

MARLEY'S GHOST

I have none to give – but you may yet – have a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

Thank you. You were always a good friend to me, Jacob.

MARLEY'S GHOST

You are to be haunted by three spirits.

SCROOGE

Oh. Haunted by three spirits? Is that the chance and hope you mentioned?

MARLEY'S GHOST

It is.

SCROOGE

Ah, well...to be haunted...I...I...mean...I think...I think I'd rather not be haunted if it's all the same to you Jacob...I'm not so sure how much more of this I can take.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Without their visits you will be doomed and cannot hope to shun the path I tread.

SCROOGE

Doomed?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Expect the first, when the bell tolls one.

SCROOGE

What sort of spirits are they, Jacob?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Expect the second when the bell tolls two.

SCROOGE

How will I know them?

MARLEY'S GHOST

And the third when the bell tolls three.

SCROOGE

What sort of things will they do to me?

MARLEY'S GHOST

I can say no more. I can stay no longer. Remember Ebenezer, for your own sake, what has passed between us.

MARLEY'S GHOST steps back towards the large window of the bed chamber. The window blows open and the sky is filled with other ghosts shackled and chained and lamenting their damnation.

MARLEY'S GHOST flies back through the window and joins the other spirits. The window slams shut and there is silence.

SCROOGE

No, no, no, no no. No, no, no, no. This is all nonsense – nonsense – a nightmare – nothing more than a bad dream. Yes, of course. That explains it. I'm having a dream. Ha, ha, ha a nightmare. There are no such things as ghosts and spirits. It is all in your mind; do you hear me Ebenezer? All in your mind. You will not be haunted. Humbug!

SFX: A DISTANT CHURCH CLOCK BEGINS THE WESTMINSTER CHIME

In the darkness a few candle flames begin to burn – then more – then hundreds – then thousands – they converge in a blinding flash and out of

the light emerges the FIRST SPIRIT: THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. SCROOGE uncovers his eyes as the brightness dims. The FIRST SPIRIT is dressed in a white robe.

SCROOGE

Are you the spirit, whose coming was foretold to me?

FIRST SPIRIT

I am.

SCROOGE

Oh, thank God, you are not as terrifying as I feared. *(He laughs)* Who and what are you?

FIRST SPIRIT

I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE

Oh? Are you indeed. Long past?

FIRST SPIRIT

No, your past.

SCROOGE

My past? Why my past.

FIRST SPIRIT

For your welfare. Come, Ebenezer, take my hand. I have much to show you.

End Scene

SCENE v: ENGLISH COUNTRY SIDE/SCHOOL ROOM

The scene is split between the English Country side and a School room. SCROOGE as a young boy is standing in the room with the headmaster. The HEADMASTER is reading a letter. Along the country lane a group of boys enter. They are talking and playing and enjoying each other's company.

SCROOGE

Good heavens. This is where I grew up. I was a boy here!

FIRST SPIRIT

These are shadows of things that have been. They cannot see us, nor can we change or influence them.

SCROOGE

Why look it's William Turner. I haven't thought of him in years. And there's Simon Hardcastle, bless my soul. He was always getting into trouble that one. Nothing serious, mind you, just boyish mischief. And Charlie Campbell – a bright lad. Very smart. Top of his class, he was. Ah, how good to see them again. How happy they are – not a care in the world – dear lads.

The BOYS exit as lights come up on the school room.

FIRST SPIRIT

Come Ebenezer, the school is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

The HEADMASTER finishes reading the letter and then sizes up a much younger SCROOGE.

HEADMASTER

Mmmm. Well, Master Scrooge, it would appear that you and I are to spend Christmas together.

SCROOGE AS A BOY

I'm not to go home?

HEADMASTER

No. This is most irregular, but I suppose we must make the best of it, eh?

SCROOGE AS A BOY

Yes, headmaster.

HEADMASTER

I like to spend the holidays reading. It is the only time of the year where I can enjoy some quiet solitude. I do hope you will follow my example and pass the time in such a manner as this. I will select a few books that might be of interest to a boy your age, Robinson Crusoe and the like. You may take your meals in the kitchen with the cook, if that is agreeable.

SCROOGE AS A BOY

Yes, headmaster.

HEADMASTER

Come now Master Scrooge, you may not be home for Christmas but you at least have a roof over your head and food. There are many in this world with far less than that. If you want more than this, then I suggest you put your nose to the grindstone, lad. God rewards those who work hard and he punishes those who don't.

SCROOGE AS A BOY

Yes, headmaster.

YOUNG SCROOGE and the HEADMASTER exit.

SCROOGE looks upon his younger self and wipes away a tear.

FIRST SPIRIT

What is the matter?

SCROOGE

Oh, nothing.

FIRST SPIRIT

Nothing?

SCROOGE

There was a boy at my door last night.

FIRST SPIRIT

You are reminded of him?

SCROOGE

He was singing a Christmas Carol.

FIRST SPIRIT

Yes.

SCROOGE

I should have given him something, I suppose. But if I was to give every poor child or man or woman, that fell upon hard times, my money – what would be left for me?

FIRST SPIRIT

We can give more than just money, Ebenezer. We can give our time and our labour to help those in need.

SCROOGE

But it's not my business.

FIRST SPIRIT

If not yours – then whose? Come, Ebenezer, let us see another Christmas.

SCROOGE is now a young man. He is in the school room writing a letter when FAN enters and interrupts him. He is overwhelmed.

FAN

Oh, dear brother.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Fan?

FAN

Yes, dear brother.

SCROOGE

Oh, my word it is Fan...oh dear Fan how good it is to see you. I have missed you so.

FAN runs over to YOUNG SCROOGE and gives him a big hug.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Why Fan, what a surprise. I am so very happy to see you. Pray, what has brought you here?

FAN

I have come to bring you home, dear brother!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Home, little Fan?

FAN

Yes! Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever.

YOUNG SCROOGE

But how?

FAN

Father has changed.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Has he indeed. Well, I'll believe that when I see it.

FAN

But he has. He has become so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Is it? Well that is a blessing.

FAN

Last night, Father spoke so kindly and gently to me 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. You must." And he sent me in a coach to bring you. Can you believe it?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Hardly, but I am very happy none-the-less.

FAN

Isn't it wonderful.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes! How extraordinary.

FAN

And you're to be a man and are never to come back here, but first we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Ha, ha, you are quite a woman, little Fan!

YOUNG SCROOGE and FAN happily hug and YOUNG SCROOGE gathers up his things and they exit.

FIRST SPIRIT

She was always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered.

SCROOGE

Yes, but she had a large heart. She was very generous and kind. She didn't have an enemy in the world. Oh fan, how I have missed you.

FIRST SPIRIT

She died a woman.

SCROOGE

Yes, and far too young. What kind of a God allows that, I ask you? She should have lived.

FIRST SPIRIT

She had children?

SCROOGE

One child.

FIRST SPIRIT

Your nephew Fred.

SCROOGE

Yes.

FIRST SPIRIT

He is not so unlike his mother in appearance or disposition is he.

SCROOGE pauses and reflects.

SCROOGE

Uh, no...that is true...he is not...but men need to be tough in order to get ahead in this world. My nephew is too soft hearted.

FIRST SPIRIT

Is he?

SCROOGE

Yes. I have tried so many times to make him understand the importance of hard work and industry but my advice seems to have little effect upon him. It goes in one ear and out the other. I am sorry to say this, but he is a fool, and will always be so.

FIRST SPIRIT

And yet he seems happy. Come, Ebenezer, there is more to see.

End Scene

SCENE vi: FEZZIWIG'S WAREHOUSE

YOUNG SCROOGE is working at his desk. He is happy having found work and love and is whistling a happy tune.

SCROOGE

Good Lord!

FIRST SPIRIT

You know this place?

SCROOGE

Know it? Why yes, I know it. I was apprenticed here! Ha, ha, ha!

FEZZIWIG enters followed by JACOB MARLEY

SCROOGE

And, look it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart – it's Fezziwig alive again!

FEZZIWIG

Ebenezer, I'd like you to meet a business associate of mine, Jacob Marley.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Very pleased to meet you, Mr. Marley.

YOUNG SCROOGE crosses and shakes MARLEY's hand.

JACOB

So, you're the young man I've been hearing so much about.

FEZZIWIG

Ebenezer has a keen mind when it comes to business Jacob. Why, year over year, we've more than doubled our profits – can you believe it!

DICK

Mr. Fezziwig, sorry to interrupt, but Harvey Grayson is here to see you.

FEZZIWIG

Oh dear, what does he want now?

SCROOGE

Look at that. It's Dick Wilkins, to be sure! Bless me, yes. There he is. We were very good friends, once.

FEZZIWIG

Perhaps you could ask him to call back later...let him know that I'm busy.

DICK

I tried sir, but he says the matter is urgent and insists upon speaking with you at once.

FEZZIWIG

Oh dear. Well, I should see him then. If you'll excuse me Jacob, I won't be long.

JACOB

Oh that's quite alright; you go ahead and attend to Mr. Grayson. I'd like a word with your young prodigy here, Mr. Scrooge.

FEZZIWIG and DICK exit.

JACOB

So, tell me Mr. Scrooge, in your professional opinion, is old Fezziwig conducting his business, in such a manner, as to maximize his profits?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Well Mr. Marley, I don't think it's right for me to comment on my Master's business affairs.

JACOB

Oh come now, I am asking your opinion, not as a friend of Fezziwig's, but as a man of business. Is old Fezziwig – to put it plainly – making as much money as he could?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Mr. Fezziwig, while a good man – but not always of business unfortunately, has other priorities.

JACOB

Ha ha! I thought so. I was going to buy him out Mr. Scrooge. I'd even made him an offer. And then you come on the scene and suddenly old Fezziwig is drowning in money and I ask myself how did he manage that? Well he didn't manage it – did he – you did. Ha ah –

you're the one and a very shrewd man of business you are Mr. Scrooge! I am most impressed.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Well, thank you Mr. Marley. That's very kind of you to say.

JACOB

Nonsense, I speak the truth. If you let your heart rule your business, like Old Fezziwig does, I would call you a fool and say you deserve any punishment your foolishness gets you, but you are no fool are you Mr. Scrooge.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I don't think of myself as a fool but...I do think...there's more to life than business.

JACOB

Ah, that's Fezziwig talking. Life is business and the business of life is profit. And you and I must talk business. I am fully prepared to offer you a position in my firm.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Are you indeed, sir!

JACOB

Yes, I have been seeking a keen young man that I can groom to be my partner and I dare say from my inquiries that you appear to be that man. If you hadn't come along Old Fezziwig would have ended up in the poor house this winter instead of celebrating Christmas. Why not come work for me where you can reap all the profits of your labour? A junior partner to begin with, but I promise you, an equal partnership if you prove yourself worthy.

YOUNG SCROOGE

My word Mr. Marley, that's very kind of you and I am very tempted and overwhelmed by your generous offer, but...

JACOB

But?

YOUNG SCROOGE

But, Mr. Fezziwig has been more than fair with me and I feel I owe him a debt of gratitude.

JACOB

You are loyal, I will say that. Well, you needn't decide right now, Mr. Scrooge, but you must make a point of coming to see me in the New Year so we can discuss matters further. You have a great future ahead of you Ebenezer – if you're willing to take it.

FEZZIWIG and DICK come back.

FEZZIWIG

That Mr. Grayson will be the ruin of me.

JACOB

Why do business with him then?

FEZZIWIG

He has been a client of mine for many years and stuck with me when times were hard so I feel it only fair that I stick with him during his hard times. Ebenezer make note that Mr. Grayson's payment for the lumber we shipped to him last month will be moved to the beginning of March.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes, Mr. Fezziwig.

FEZZIWIG

Poor fellow. Now Jacob, you must stay and have a glass of punch and join us in celebrating the holiday.

JACOB

Thank you no, Mr. Fezziwig. I'm afraid, I have some other business to attend to.

FEZZIWIG

On Christmas Eve?

JACOB

A small matter, but a matter that demands my attention non-the-less. Good day sir.

FEZZIWIG

Merry Christmas, Mr. Marley.

JACOB

Yes, Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Merry Christmas, sir.

JACOB exits

FEZZIWIG

Here it is Christmas Eve and here we are still sitting at our desks! That will never do. Come Ebenezer, come Dick, it's time to forget all about work and have some fun. Alright, everyone, clear the floor – bring on the fiddler and the food and the punch – come now where is my wife and daughters – let us celebrate!

A FIDDLER enters as does MRS. FEZZIWIG and her DAUGHTERS as well as YOUNG MEN of the business and friends and neighbours. Great tables filled with food are set in the corners and the fiddler begins to fiddle as the couples line up and do a traditional ballroom dance or fancy polka of the time. BELLE lines up opposite SCROOGE.

SCROOGE

Oh my word it is Belle. Look at how young she is. How beautiful.

FIRST SPIRIT

You know this woman?

SCROOGE

Know her? Oh yes, indeed, I do. (To Belle) Oh Belle. Belle how wonderful to see you.

FIRST SPIRIT

She cannot hear you.

SCROOGE

Is there no way for me to speak to her?

FIRST SPIRIT

She is but a memory.

YOUNG SCROOGE dances with BELLE and the two are having a grand time. SCROOGE watches from the side and finds himself enjoying the music and dancing along with the couples clapping his hands and shadowing himself and BELLE as they dance around the warehouse. This

is a happy memory for him and we see that joy is not entirely dead in the old man.

The song ends and the couples applaud. FEZZIWIG and MRS. FEZZIWIG are beside YOUNG SCROOGE and BELLE.

MRS. FEZZIWIG

Why husband, you never told me that our dear Mr. Scrooge was such an accomplished dancer.

FEZZIWIG

Yes my dear, it would appear that young Ebenezer has feet for dancing as well as a head for business. Ha, ha, ha. Good lad!

MRS. FEZZIWIG

What more could you ask for in a husband, I wonder Belle?

MR. FEZZIWIG

Now, now my dear we're making the young couple blush. Come let us attend to our other guests.

MR. FEZZIWIG & MRS. FEZZIWIG mingle with the other guests as they talk and drink and enjoy the party.

BELLE and YOUNG SCROOGE move to a more private area where they can talk alone.

BELLE

Don't be embarrassed Ebenezer, they're only teasing.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I know, but it takes a great deal more than being able to dance to provide for a family and a wife in this harsh world. It takes time to build wealth and position. Time that you, my dear and beautiful Belle, may not wish to wait. If only there was some small sign by which I could know your heart.

BELLE softly kisses YOUNG SCROOGE. There is tenderness and love between them.

BELLE

I love you Ebenezer and have told you often that I will wait until our fortunes are better.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Well then, speaking of fortunes, Mr. Marley seems willing to make me an offer to be a junior partner in his firm – can you believe it!

BELLE

Are you not happy here?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Very, but if given the opportunity to improve one's position in life, I see no reason not to take it. Why? Does it trouble you?

BELLE

From what I know of Mr. Marley, I'm not so certain he's the kind of man you should be working for.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Nonsense. He's successful and rich and if he takes an interest in my future then I should at least consider his offer.

DICK interrupts YOUNG SCROOGE and BELLE

DICK

And what are you two up to?

YOUNG SCROOGE

We're not up to anything.

DICK

Oh, well then, perhaps I could convince Belle to join me for a dance.

BELLE

I'm sorry Dick, but my dance card is already filled.

DICK

Is it? Come now, what's going on here? You can tell your friend Dick Wilkens.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Well, if you must know (*Belle and Young Scrooge exchange glances*) Belle and I plan to marry.

DICK

Do you. Ha. I thought there was something going on between you two. Well, congratulations Ebenezer. Congratulations Belle. I wish the two of you a long and happy life.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Thank you, Dick.

BELLE

And I'm sure that one day you'll meet a fine young woman and marry her and have a very happy and fine family of your own.

DICK

If I'm ever fortunate enough to meet someone as beautiful and sweet as you are Belle, then I hope I'm smart enough to let her know how I feel and snatch her up, before someone else does. Again congratulations.

YOUNG SCROOGE

What a grand night.

DICK & SCROOGE

Grand, indeed!

BELLE

Yes, and all thanks to old Fezziwig.

YOUNG SCROOGE

What a fine and generous man he is.

SCROOGE

Here here!

DICK

To our dear Mr. Fezziwig, may he have a long life and may good fortune follow him all his days.

YOUNG SCROOGE & SCROOGE

Well said.

BELLE

Agreed.

SCROOGE

I had forgotten that Old Fezziwig had such a generous spirit.

FIRST SPIRIT

Generous? How can you say that? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money – three or four at the most. Why does he deserve such praise?

SCROOGE

It's not the amount he spent, Spirit. It's in his power to make us happy or unhappy to make our work a pleasure or a toil. His power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count them up. Why the happiness he gives to his employees is as generous and great as if it had cost a fortune.

FIRST SPIRIT

So, you no longer believe that fools such as old Fezziwig here should be boiled in their own pudding and buried with a stake of Holly through their heart?

SCROOGE

Ah, well...I...didn't mean old Fezziwig. No. No. No. He was a good master. A very good master. I liked working for him. He treated me well.

SPIRIT

Something troubles you, I think.

SCROOGE

Ah,...I...I was just thinking about my own Clerk Bob Cratchit and I would have liked to have said something to him just now. That's all.

The FIDDLER begins another tune and the couples line up ready to dance.

DICK

Now I'm sorry, Belle, but if Scrooge gets to spend a lifetime with you, then I think, I should at least get one dance. Is that too much to ask?

BELLE

Ebenezer?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Oh go on, put the poor man out of his misery. But only one dance, mind you, then she's all mine Dick.

DICK and BELLE join the other dancers. YOUNG SCROOGE gets grabbed by one of the FEZZIWIG daughters and joins in the dancing.

FIRST SPIRIT

Come, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

Oh, must we go? Can we not stay a little while longer?

FIRST SPIRIT

We cannot.

SCROOGE

But why not?

FIRST SPIRIT

There is still much to see and my time grows short. Come, hurry.

SCROOGE reluctantly leaves with the FIRST SPIRIT.

End Scene

SCENE vii: SCROOGE & MARLEY'S

JACOB MARLEY sits at the desk. YOUNG SCROOGE stands to one side. FEZZIWIG is reading the document before him. After some time FEZZIWIG puts down the document. He is quite defeated.

JACOB

Are you quite satisfied, Mr. Fezziwig?

FEZZIWIG

You offered me a great deal more than this amount five years ago Mr. Marley.

JACOB

That was five years ago and your fortunes have changed. Two shillings on the pound is more than fair. You won't get a better offer than that.

YOUNG SCROOGE

And if you wait much longer, Mr. Fezziwig, your holdings may end up being entirely worthless.

JACOB

I offer you this amount only because of our long association and the business we have done in the past. The hard truth is you have little choice in the matter.

FEZZIWIG

So, it would appear.

FEZZIWIG signs the paper.

JACOB

You've made the right decision. You have until the end of the week to vacate the premises.

YOUNG SCROOGE

You are free to take whatever personal items you like, but...remember, anything in the company name now belongs to us.

JACOB

Cheer up old man. You're not completely without means.

FEZZIWIG exits.

JACOB

Ah ha Ebenezer, what a bargain, eh! I would gladly have paid twice – three times – the amount. You never accept the first offer. It is always far below what the buyer is willing to pay. Poor fool. With business sense like that, is it any wonder he drove his company into the ground.

YOUNG SCROOGE is silent.

JACOB

Come on, what's the matter? Feeling sorry for Fezziwig are we.

SCROOGE

I'm just worried about what will become of the old man, that's all.

JACOB

He's only in this situation because of his own doing. How many times have I told you Ebenezer, business is business and if you let your emotions and personal feelings interfere it clouds your judgement.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes, of course, you are right: business is business.

JACOB

And the only thing that matters in business is making a profit!

YOUNG SCROOGE

And making the biggest profit you can, right Jacob.

JACOB

Right you are. Come on, let's celebrate. Let's toast our success.

BELLE enters.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Ah, yes of course. I will but um...

JACOB

But you have some domestic matters to take care of first, it seems. Of course. You do that. I'll leave you two alone then, shall I? Belle.

BELLE

Mr. Marley.

JACOB exits.

YOUNG SCROOGE

What has brought you here at this time of day?

BELLE

I spoke with our friend, Dick Wilkins, and he told me that you and your partner Jacob Marley are going to buy Old Fezziwigs.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes, we have in fact. The deal is inked. You just missed the old man.

BELLE

You never told me.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I don't discuss my other business dealings with you, why should this be any different?

BELLE

Dick also told me that you were cutting everyone's wages by half.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes, well that can't be helped. Why do you think Fezziwig had to sell? He was careless with his money – paying his staff far more than his competitors and extending credit when he shouldn't. We'll get the company back on its feet, sell it, and make a good profit.

BELLE

Ebenezer.

YOUNG SCROOGE

It's business Belle.

BELLE

And what am I to you then? A bad investment.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Don't be silly.

BELLE

I'm not being silly. Another idol has replaced me in your life and if it can cheer and comfort you in the future, as I would have tried to do, then I have no just cause to grieve.

YOUNG SCROOGE

What are you talking about? What idol has displaced you?

BELLE

A golden one.

YOUNG SCROOGE

There is nothing in this world as harsh as poverty. How can you condemn with such contempt the pursuit of wealth?

BELLE

You fear the world too much.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Because, there is much to fear.

BELLE

You were not like this when we first met. I have seen your more noble aspirations disappear one by one, until all you care about is profit and gain.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I am not changed towards you, am I?

BELLE

You are. Do you not see it?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Everything I have done has been for us.

BELLE

Then why have we not married? You are certainly wealthier now than you were five years ago.

SCROOGE

One bad investment, one deal gone wrong, can ruin a man. You think I want to end up like old Fezziwig, I think not.

BELLE

I think, you are changed. When our contract was made you were a different man. I have not changed. When we were of one heart our marriage promised happiness but now that we are of two my heart is filled with misery.

SCROOGE

Oh, so I make you miserable, do I?

BELLE

Are you not miserable? You hardly seem happy at the prospect of us spending our lives together and so I have no choice but to release you.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Release me? Have I ever sought release?

BELLE

In words, no. Never.

YOUNG SCROOGE

In what then?

BELLE

In a changed nature. Tell me, if you had never promised to marry would you seek me out and try to win me now?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Of course I would. You think not.

BELLE

I doubt very much that you would choose a poor and dowerless girl. You who measures everything in financial gain. And if you did choose her and turned your back on your one

guiding principle you would in time come to regret your decision. And so, I release you with a full heart, for the love of him you once were and for what we could have been. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

BELLE exits

SCROOGE

Go after her you fool! What is wrong with you? Why are you just standing there man – move your feet.

YOUNG SCROOGE considers going after her. He heads towards the door when MARLEY enters from his office carrying two glasses of sherry.

JACOB

Ah, she's gone then is she?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Umm, yes.

SCROOGE

Don't listen to him, go after her. What are you waiting for?

JACOB

Come now Ebenezer let us toast our success. Today is a new beginning. Today you have earned the right to be a full partner. How does that sound?

YOUNG SCROOGE

A full partner!

JACOB hands YOUNG SCROOGE a glass of Sherry.

JACOB

It was promised you and I am a man of my word. You have more than proven yourself, and in honour of the occasion, I am going to the expense of having a new sign made with both our names on it. We will be a force to be reckoned with, I dare say.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes Jacob, a force to be reckoned with. A full partner. My word.

JACOB

A full partner. Cheers!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Cheers!

YOUNG SCROOGE and JACOB toast their success.

SCROOGE

Spirit, show me no more. Conduct me home. Why do you torture me with these visions? I do not want to think of them. If I cannot change them, why show them to me?

FIRST SPIRIT

So you may consider the path you have tread. Come, there is more for you to see.

SCROOGE

No more! No more. Please, show me no more.

FIRST SPIRIT

Our time grows short. Hurry.

End Scene

SCENE viii: BELLE’S HOME

BELLE is a much older woman now. Married to her old friend DICK and surrounded by five happy children ranging in age from six to sixteen. SCROOGE and the FIRST SPIRIT watch.

BELLE
Alright, off to bed, all of you.

HUGH
Oh, do we have to mommy?

BELLE
Yes, it’s well past your bedtime.

GEORGE
But we’re not tired.

ALICE
No, we’re not.

GRACE
Can’t we have a story?

BELLE
You’ve already had three.

HUGH
Just one more – please.

BELLE
More stories tomorrow my dears.

GEORGE & GRACE
Awww.

DICK
Now off to bed all of you. Your mother and I will be up shortly to kiss you goodnight.

GEORGE

But, I'm hungry.

ALICE

Me too.

BELLE

Hungry? After all the tarts you had for dessert, how can you be hungry?

GRACE

Can't we please have another story?

TABATHA

I can tell them a story mother.

BELLE

Will you my dear?

TABATHA

Oh, yes...you and father rest and I can get the little ones to bed.

BELLE

Thank you my dear. Now you hear that? Your sister is going to tell you a story.

HUGH

Yay!

GRACE

Another story!

TABATHA

What story do you want to hear?

HUGH

Tw'as the night before Christmas!

GRACE

Yes, tell us that story.

TABATHA

But you already heard father tell you that story.

ALICE

We want to hear it again.

GEORGE

Again and again and again.

TABATHA

Alright, but I'm not sure I can tell it as well as father does. Come on now.

There is a flurry of kisses and hugs and goodnights as the children run off to bed.

BELLE (*Laughing*)

Oh my, what a day!

DICK

A wonderful day, my dear. Oh, it feels good to sit down. Do you know I saw an old friend of ours in town this afternoon.

BELLE

Oh, who?

DICK

Guess!

BELLE

Guess? How can I?

DICK

Oh, come on, be a sport.

BELLE

Well give me a clue then.

DICK

I'll give you one. Humbug.

BELLE

Mr. Scrooge.

DICK

Ha, ha, ha, Mr. Scrooge it was.

BELLE

And how is he?

DICK

Fully engaged with his enterprises it would seem.

BELLE

Focused on some very good business opportunities and timely investments, no doubt.

SCROOGE

And what's wrong with that?

DICK

We spoke of nothing but business and I must say he did not seem very happy to see me.

SCROOGE

Why would I be happy to see you – you scoundrel.

DICK

He has a peculiar effect on people these days you know. Crowds part way, like the Red Sea before Moses, when Scrooge walks down the street. But I stood my ground and he had no choice but to acknowledge my presence. “Scrooge, my good man, how are you?” I said!

BELLE

And what was his reply?

DICK

Good day, sir.

BELLE

That was all? Good day, sir. Nothing more.

DICK

Well, who can blame him. His misfortune has been my good fortune. You my dear, have made me rich beyond anything I could have hoped for. He has his money but little else.

BELLE

How very sad.

DICK

Sad?

BELLE

You knew him Dick when he wasn't so harsh with the world. He changed when his sister became ill and died.

DICK

Sooner or later his true nature would have surfaced, don't you think.

BELLE

His sister was always able to bring out his good and loving nature.

DICK

If Scrooge ever had a good and loving nature it has long since been buried and is dead to the world.

BELLE

I hope that's not entirely true.

DICK

You are kind. You see the good in all. I'm so glad you thought me good enough to marry. You certainly made me wait long enough.

BELLE

You should have said something.

DICK

You were engaged. To make my feelings known before you were free to be mine would have been most inappropriate and I regret nothing because we are together now, my dear, and nothing in this world could make me happier.

BELLE and DICK kiss warmly and lovingly and cuddle by the hearth.

SCROOGE wipes a tear away.

SCROOGE

Spirit, remove me from this place. Why do you torture me? Why do you show me these things?

SPIRIT

These are the shadows of things that have been. They are what they are, and cannot be changed.

SCROOGE

Please I cannot bear it! Leave me. Show me no more. Haunt me no longer. I do not want these memories. Wash them from my mind and leave me in peace!

*The SPIRIT disappears as it had appeared in a blinding flash of light.
SCROOGE finds himself alone in the darkness. Blackout!*

End Act One

A CHRISTMAS CAROL
ACT II

SCENE i: A LONDON STREET

The stage is dark and in the blackness the WESTMINSTER CHIMES begin.

SFX: WESTMINSTER CHIMES

A dim light falls upon SCROOGE. He is alone in the dark and exhausted from his encounter with the FIRST SPIRIT. He rises to his feet and looks around uncertain of what to expect next. As the hour strikes two a great wind blows and the SECOND SPIRIT the GHOST of CHRISTMAS PRESENT appears surrounded by gifts and food. This giant of a SPIRIT is dressed in one simple green robe bordered with white fur. On his head he wears a holly wreath. His eyes are bright and his voice is rich and booming. He laughs a great laugh.

SCROOGE

Oh my word, what sort of Spirit are you?

SECOND SPIRIT

What sort of Spirit am I? Do you not know me?

SCROOGE

I do not. You are unfamiliar to me.

SECOND SPIRIT

Am I? Well then, come closer! Come closer and know me better man!

SCROOGE

Oh Spirit, I am exhausted from my previous encounter and cannot go on. I do not wish to seem ungrateful, but I am tired and in need of sleep.

The SECOND SPIRIT hands SCROOGE a great mug of hot rum punch.

SECOND SPIRIT

Here drink from my cup and you will be restored in more than this and given the strength to continue. We have much to see and little time. Drink up man – drink up!

SCROOGE drinks deeply.

SECOND SPIRIT

I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. You mean to tell me you've never shared in the abundance of the season; never given a gift; received a gift; enjoyed a Christmas feast; a plum pudding; a rum punch! Ha, ha, ha. Come now Scrooge, there was a Christmas or two – many years ago – when you were a much younger man and had plans and hopes for a life with Belle when you knew my brothers.

SCROOGE

That may be true, but that was long ago.

SECOND SPIRIT

Well then you know the joy of giving and fun of receiving. It is not dead in you. You can awaken these feelings of generosity and kindness. The choice is yours my friend; live as you have, or change.

SCROOGE

But I am too old to change.

SECOND SPIRIT

Nonsense, come, let me show you the joy of the season. It knows no class boundaries. It knows no age. It is shared by all regardless of race, gender, or wealth. Touch my robe and we shall see how even the poor have much to celebrate on Christmas Day.

End Scene

SCENE ii: BOB CRATCHIT'S HOME

The family is preparing for the Christmas feast. The table is being set by MRS. CRATCHIT and BELINDA. PETER is tending to the potatoes and the two youngest CRATCHIT's – JUSTIN and ABBY – are running about happily.

SCROOGE

Where is this place?

SECOND SPIRIT

This is the home of your clerk Bob Cratchit. Have you never been to visit?

SCROOGE

No.

SECOND SPIRIT

It is a modest dwelling, but a happy one.

JUSTIN and ABBY run around their mother and the table as MRS. CRATCHIT tries to avoid dropping anything.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Goodness...me...ha, ha, ha, settle down you two before you crash into something or make me drop a plate and break it.

JUSTIN

Where's daddy, mommy?

MRS. CRATCHIT

I don't know.

ABBY

Why isn't he home yet?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh your father and Tiny Tim are probably up to some mischief knowing those two. They should have been home long before this, and your sister Martha wasn't nearly this late last Christmas.

BELINDA

Look, here's Martha now, mother.

MARTHA enters.

JUSTIN

Hurrah, here's Martha!

ABBY

There's such a goose, Martha!

MARTHA

Is there?

JUSTIN

Yes!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Why bless your heart alive my dear – how late you are!

MRS. CRATCHIT kisses MARTHA and takes her shawl and bonnet for her.

MARTHA

We had a lot of work to finish up last night and there was an awful lot to clear away this morning, mother. I'm sorry, I came as quickly as I could.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Well, never mind, you are here now. Sit down before the fire, my dear, and warm yourself.

JUSTIN

No, no, no!

ABBY

There's father coming. Hide, Martha, hide!

MARTHA

Hide?

JUSTIN

Yes, hide.

MARTHA hides.

BOB enters in a grand mood with TINY TIM who carries a small crutch and wears leg braces.

ABBY

Hello father!

JUSTIN

Happy Christmas.

BELINDA

Happy Christmas Father.

PETER

Hello Father, Happy Christmas.

BOB

Yes, Happy Christmas indeed. *(To Mrs. Cratchit)* How are you my dear?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Very glad you and Tim are finally home.

BOB

Mmmm, it all smells delicious, doesn't it Tim.

TINY TIM

Yes, father.

BOB

Where is our Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh, not coming, I'm afraid.

BOB

What? Not coming! Not coming on Christmas Day. But why?

BELINDA

Don't you know father?

BOB

Know what? Has something happened?

PETER

Yes, something has.

BOB

Well what is it? What's happened?

BELINDA

Martha has...been...summoned to Buckingham Palace to meet the Queen.

BOB

Oh. Has she indeed?

JUSTIN

Oh yes, it's quite true father. They sent a carriage to pick her up.

TINY TIM

Lucky Martha.

BOB

And she's to have Christmas dinner with the Queen, no doubt.

PETER

I wonder what they'll have.

BOB

Whatever they have it won't be near as good as the feast your mother has prepared for us, I am sure of that.

JUSTIN

That's true.

ABBY

Yummy!

BOB

Dear me, poor Martha stuck having Christmas dinner with the Queen – how horrible – that will never do.

ABBY

What are you going to do father?

BOB

The only thing I can do.

JUSTIN

What?

BOB

We'll just have to invite the Queen here for Christmas dinner so Martha can be with her family.

ABBY

Are you really going to invite the Queen?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh Bob, don't be silly.

BOB

I'm not being silly. I'm sure we have room for one more at the table my dear. Now everyone practice your bows and curtseys. We'll want to show her majesty, that although we may not live in a palace, we do know proper etiquette.

BOB bows and all the children practice their bows and curtseys.

BOB

Come on now Peter, Belinda, that's it. Very good Justin.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh, Abby, what a little lady you are; and Tim, you are very dashing sir. Isn't he Bob.

BOB

Oh yes, and I dare say, once the Queen gets a taste of your mother's fine cooking, I have no doubt, she'll be a regular guest here for Sunday dinners.

JUSTIN

The Queen!

BOB

None other.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh, Bob.

MARTHA comes out of her hiding place.

MARTHA

Oh father, you are a silly one!

BOB

What's this? Martha here! Good heavens!

MARTHA

I was here all along and you knew it.

BOB

Heavens no. I'm quite astonished to find you here, but very pleased. Merry Christmas, Martha. I have missed you so.

MARTHA

Merry Christmas, Father.

Martha and Bob hug.

MRS. CRATCHIT

And how was Church?

BOB

Grand my dear. The new deacon is a fine fellow.

MRS. CRATCHIT

And how did little Tim behave?

BOB

Better than gold, isn't that right Tim.

TINY TIM

Yes, father.

BOB

You're a thoughtful child, you know that. Do you know what he told me, my dears, on the way home?

JUSTIN

No, what?

BOB

That he hoped people saw him in church because he was a cripple and that on Christmas Day it would be good for people to remember who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.

PETER

Maybe one day Tim will be a deacon.

BOB

Of course, why not!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Our little Tim, a deacon, wouldn't that be a blessing.

MARTHA

It certainly would.

BOB

And you are growing stronger my boy. Stronger and more hearty every day, aren't you. Isn't he my dears.

The family all agree although they know the truth as BOB gives TIM a big hug.

BOB

Well let's eat shall we. Everything looks and smells so good. My goodness there never was such a goose as this.

The family digs into the feast.

SCROOGE

Seems like a very small goose for such a large family.

SECOND SPIRIT

And what of it? There are many in this world with far less than that. God rewards those who work hard and he punishes those who don't.

SCROOGE

And so God means to punish this child and this family. I can't believe that. I can't believe that's true. What is to become of Tiny Tim?

SECOND SPIRIT

I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.

SCROOGE

Die? No. No, no, no – the Ghost of Christmas past had no power to change things but surely you have that power. You are here in the present. Surely you, or some other emissary from your realm, can provide for the boy.

SECOND SPIRIT

The power to change the world lies not in my realm but in the realm of the living. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, none other of my race will find him here.

SCROOGE

You can't let him die, Spirit, if it can be helped.

SECOND SPIRIT

Why not let him die and decrease the surplus population. What business is it of yours?

SCROOGE

You use my own words against me.

SECOND SPIRIT

And why not? Who are you, to decide what men shall live and what men shall die? In the sight of Heaven, you may be less fit to live than millions of others just like this poor man's child.

The family laughs and has just finished desert.

BOB

Oh, my dear, you have outdone yourself this year. What a feast and your pudding, by far the best you've ever made – wouldn't you all agree.

MARTHA

Oh, yes mother, a very fine pudding.

JUSTIN

Best ever!

BELINDA

It was so good.

BOB raises his glass as do all the other CRATCHITS

BOB

Ah, the whole family here for Christmas. I could not be happier and so, a Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

ALL

God bless us!

TINY TIM

God bless us, every one!

They all drink the toast.

BOB

You are quite right Tim. God bless us everyone. And so, with that in mind, and in the spirit of the season, I say we toast Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Mr. Scrooge!

BOB

Yes, my dear.

MRS. CRATCHIT

The Founder of the Feast, indeed. I wish I had him here – I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon.

BOB

My dear, the children. Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Only on Christmas Day would one ever drink to the health of such a cruel, stingy, and unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow.

BOB

My dear, Christmas – a kind, forgiving, charitable time.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh, very well, I'll drink to his health for your sake and the Day's but not for his. Long life to him. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt. Mr. Scrooge.

All

Mr. Scrooge.

TINY TIM

God bless Mr. Scrooge.

They all drink but are sour and quiet for a long moment after the toast.

BOB

Well...what say we have a song, then eh? How does that sound?

JUSTIN

Oh, yes!

BELINDA

Please.

MARTHA

What a good idea.

PETER

What shall we sing?

ABBY

Jingle Bells!

TINY TIM

Yes, Jingle Bells!

BOB

Alright, Jingle Bells it is.

BOB begins and the family joins in. They sing with loud voices and laughter.

ALL

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 – HEY!
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS
JINGLE ALL THE WAY
OH, WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE
IN A ONE HORSE OPEN SLEIGH

The light fades on the CRATCHIT home.

SECOND SPIRIT

Come let us visit your nephew's and see how he celebrates the season.

End Scene

SCENE iii: FRED'S HOME

Fred's home is decorated for Christmas. There is a fine Christmas tree in the room along with a great many guests all playing a game of Yes and No. FRED is there as is his wife EMMA and her sister ROSE as well as TOPPER and COUSIN HERB.

EMMA

Is it living or dead?

FRED

Ah, yes or no questions only, remember.

EMMA

Sorry. Is it living?

FRED

Yes.

TOPPER

Is it an animal?

FRED

Oh yes.

COUSIN HERB

Is it a cow? Mooooo!

FRED

No.

EMMA

Does it live in the country?

FRED

No.

EMMA

In the city then?

Yes.	FRED
Does it growl?	TOPPER
Oh, yes.	FRED
Is it a dog?	ROSE
Woof woof!	COUSIN HERB
No.	FRED
A cat?	TOPPER
No.	FRED
A rat?	EMMA
Uh, no.	FRED
Is it a horse?	COUSIN HERB
No.	FRED
A jackass!	TOPPER

COUSIN HERB

Heehaw!

FRED

Yes and no.

EMMA

Oh, I know what it is, Fred! I know it!

FRED

What is it?

EMMA

It's your Uncle Scrooge!

FRED

Yes!

A roar of laughter from the group of friends and family.

FRED

Ha, ha, ha! When I saw him yesterday he said that Christmas was a, "Humbug!" can you believe it!

TOPPER

A humbug!

FRED

And he believes it too, poor fellow. Ha, ha, ha!

EMMA

More shame for him, Fred.

ROSE

What a thing to say.

FRED

He's a comical old fellow that's the truth and not as pleasant as he could be.

COUSIN HERB

That's certainly true.

FRED

But his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

EMMA

He is very rich.

COUSIN HERB

One of the richest men in London.

FRED

What of it? His wealth is of no use to him.

TOPPER

I'd make good use of it.

FRED

I'm sure you would Topper, but what good does he do with it? He certainly doesn't make himself comfortable with it.

EMMA

I have no patience with him.

ROSE

Neither do I.

FRED

Oh, I have. I am sorry for him. I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his harsh and uncaring attitude? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us and not come to dinner and so he loses a very fine dinner and a chance to celebrate the season.

TOPPER

Very true, I'm sure it will be a very fine dinner.

COUSIN HERB

A delicious dinner, I have little doubt. Mmmmm.

EMMA

Thank you.

FRED

And yet, there was a time when he wasn't such an unpleasant old fool.

EMMA

What are you talking about Fred?

FRED

He often wrote to my mother and I came across some letters he'd sent to her when he was a young lad in school and during his courtship to someone named Belle.

SCROOGE

You had no right to read those Fred.

EMMA

Courtship!

TOPPER

Scrooge was engaged?

ROSE

I don't believe it!

FRED

Believe it.

SCROOGE

Quit right, why shouldn't you believe it.

FRED

Does that change your opinion of him? To know that he once was in love; that he once had hopes of becoming a husband and father.

EMMA

Not any husband I would like.

The crowd laughs.

ROSE

What happened?

SCROOGE

I made a mistake.

FRED

Oh, I don't know. The engagement was broken off for some reason, I take it.

TOPPER

I guess he lost interest...you know interest...Scrooge is a money lender...um.

Oh I get it now – laughter from the crowd.

ROSE

Oh yes, I get it now.

FRED

Well whatever happened, that's the Scrooge my mother loved. He was a very different man than the man he has become.

EMMA

How sad.

FRED

Isn't it. And so, I plan to give him the same chance to have Christmas dinner with us every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it and of all people if he finds me going there, in good cheer, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you? Merry Christmas, come have dinner with us. And if the only outcome is that he takes it into his conscience to leave his poor clerk, Bob Cratchit, fifty pounds, then that's something.

EMMA

Here, here Fred.

TOPPER

Well said.

COUSIN HERB

Good for you.

FRED

And so, in considering the merriment he has given us, I think we should drink to his health. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!

COUSIN HERB

Heehaw!

FRED

He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nonetheless. Uncle Scrooge!

ALL

Uncle Scrooge!

They toast Scrooge.

SECOND SPIRIT

You treat your nephew with such contempt and yet he drinks to your health. He wishes you well. He invites you to dinner.

SCROOGE

My nephew is a dreamer and has no head for business.

SECOND SPIRIT

And yet he seems much happier than you.

SCROOGE

He is young and when you are young you don't always understand how cruel the world can be.

SECOND SPIRIT

Just because the world can be cruel is no reason for you to be. Come Ebenezer we must hurry.

End Scene

SCENE iv: MR. BENTLEY's PLACE OF BUSINESS

MR. BENTLEY, MR. MURDOCK, and MRS. DILBER are in the office.

MR. BENTLEY

Mr. Scrooge recommended your services Mrs. Dilber.

MRS. DILBER

Yes, sir.

MR. BENTLEY

He said you were dependable and very affordable.

MRS. DILBER

Did he sir? Um, how affordable did he say?

MR. BENTLEY

I shall pay you the same hourly wage he does; I see no reason to pay more.

MRS. DILBER

Well, Mr. Bentley it's an extra half hour coming and going to your place than to Mr. Scrooges.

MR. BENTLEY

That's not my concern. I have no intention of paying you for travel time. If you want the job you can have it. Otherwise, I'll find someone else.

MRS. DILBER

No, don't do that Mr. Bentley, please...I could use the extra money, sir. Thank you.

MR. BENTLEY

Excellent. You can begin in the new year, Mrs. Dilber. Monday and Friday afternoon, if you please.

MRS. DILBER

Yes, Mr. Bentley. Merry Christmas.

MR. BENTLEY

Good afternoon.

MRS. DILBER exits.

MR. BENTLEY

The question is, who stands to profit more Mr. Murdock?

MR. MURDOCK

It would appear from all accounts that this would be a good and even match Mr. Bentley. Together you and Mr. Scrooge would have ten times the leverage you have now.

MR. BENTLEY

It would certainly open up many business opportunities abroad.

MR. MURDOCK

Yes, sir.

MR. BENTLEY

There's a lot of money to be made in India – and of course there is the fur trade in the new world, that interests me. There is a hunger for fur, Mr. Murdock, and the new world offers an abundance of such resources, and the man willing to invest, wisely mind you, will be well rewarded, I would think.

MR. MURDOCK

I imagine so sir.

MR. BENTLEY

Yes, I like this idea a lot. Mr. Scrooge is a good man of business. Level headed – sharp as a tack and good on his word.

MR. MURDOCK

Very good sir. Shall we call it a day?

MR. BENTLEY

Uh yes, you can go, but I plan to stay a bit longer.

MR. MURDOCK

Oh, are you not going to a Christmas dinner yourself Mr. Bentley?

MR. BENTLEY

No.

MR. MURDOCK

Oh, well um you would be welcome to join my wife and myself. It is just the two of us but I hate to think of anyone dining alone at Christmas.

MR. BENTLEY

Thank you Mr. Murdock, but I prefer to dine alone at Christmas. It's not a time of the year I particularly enjoy. People become unfocused and sentimental. It is a poor time for doing business and I am glad when it is over.

MR. MURDOCK

Oh, I see.

MR. BENTLEY

We serve God best through hard work and industry, Mr. Murdock.

MR. MURDOCK

Yes sir. Very well, good evening then.

MR. BENTLEY

Good evening.

MR. BENTLEY sits in his office counting coins and putting them into a strong box. The light fades and SCROOGE and the SECOND SPIRIT are left standing surrounded by darkness.

SECOND SPIRIT

Does this man's Christmas seem familiar to you?

SCROOGE

It does.

SECOND SPIRIT

It is a sad way to spend the day compared to the joy and love we have seen from others.

SCROOGE

Yes, Spirit.

SECOND SPIRIT

Each man travels a road in life that leads him in certain directions. You yourself are on this road – but it need not be so.

SCROOGE

No.

SECOND SPIRIT

No.

SCROOGE

Spirit, I did not want to say anything before, but I have noticed that you are aged.

SECOND SPIRIT

I am. My life upon this globe is very brief. It ends tonight.

SCROOGE

Oh Spirit, do not leave me – I do not want to be left alone – is there nothing more you can show me?

SECOND SPIRIT

There is one thing more you must see.

The SPIRIT reveals two children – a BOY and a GIRL – wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, and miserable. They knell at the Spirit's feet, and cling to his robe.

SCROOGE

Are these your children?

SECOND SPIRIT

They are Mans.

SCROOGE

Mans?

SECOND SPIRIT

This boy is Ignorance and this girl is Greed. Beware them both. But most of all, beware this boy. If he is allowed to grow and flourish he will bring you nothing but doom.

SCROOGE

How?

SECOND SPIRIT

Those who know him well live in fear and act on fear with violence and hate. If you encounter this boy speak against him and all that would use him. Silence him with love and compassion and knowledge, for this is the path towards understanding and peace.

SFX: CLOCK BEGINS TO CHIME THE WESTMINSTER AND THEN RING THE HOUR OF THREE.

SCROOGE

Have they no refuge or resource?

SECOND SPIRIT

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

The SECOND SPIRIT and the BOY and GIRL vanish. Fog swirls about SCROOGE as the clock strikes three. The THIRD SPIRIT the GHOST of CHRISTMAS FUTURE moves forward out of the darkness. He is a cloaked phantom wearing a hood.

SCROOGE

Am I in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?

The THIRD SPIRIT nods its head.

SCROOGE

And you are here to show me the shadows of things that have not happened yet, but – will – happen in the future?

THE THIRD SPIRIT nods its head.

SCROOGE

Oh, Ghost of the Future, I fear you more than any spectre I have seen tonight. I do not want to continue but I know your purpose is to do me good and I know that you have lessons to teach and so I am prepared to bear you company.

The THIRD SPIRIT points its bony hand straight before them.

SCROOGE

Yes, yes, lead on! Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit.

End Scene

SCENE v: LONDON BUSINESS DISTRICT

Three BUSINESS MEN are standing in a small group. SCROOGE and the THIRD SPIRIT stand nearby.

FIRST MAN

I had heard that Mr. Bentley and Mr. Scrooge were joining forces.

SECOND MAN

Yes, I'd heard the very same thing.

THIRD MAN

Two peas in a pod, eh. Those two.

FIRST MAN

Yes, of course that's all changed now that he's dead.

SECOND MAN

When did he die?

FIRST MAN

Last night, I believe – and quite unexpected.

THIRD MAN

What was the matter with him?

FIRST MAN

God knows.

SECOND MAN

What has he done with his money?

FIRST MAN

I haven't heard.

THIRD MAN

Left it to his company, I suppose.

SECOND MAN

He hasn't left any of it to me. That's all I know.

They laugh.

FIRST MAN

It will probably be a very cheap funeral, I would imagine.

THIRD MAN

On my life, I don't know of anybody who will go – do you?

SECOND MAN

Oh, I'll go but only if a lunch is provided.

FIRST MAN

I don't think he ever bought anyone lunch when he was alive. Why would he go to the expense of buying us a lunch now that he's dead.

SECOND MAN

Well, if there is no lunch I can't think of any other reason to go – can you?

THIRD MAN

No.

FIRST MAN

Nor I.

Another laugh.

The THIRD SPIRIT and SCROOGE move away.

SCROOGE

Spirit, those men – I know them. How far into the future is this? Is it Mr. Bentley who has died...am I to learn from his life and his nature...so that I do not make the same mistake? Why do you not speak to me?

The THIRD SPIRIT points and moves off. SCROOGE follows.

SCROOGE

Yes, yes, there is more to see...I understand...lead on and I will follow.

End Scene

SCENE vi: OLD JOE’S

OLD JOE’S is on the darker side of town and is a place where illegal goods are bought and sold and no questions asked. OLD JOE sits counting out his money and making notations in his book.

SCROOGE

Where is this place? Am I to end up alone and destitute? Am I to lose my fortune? Who is this man and what does he have to do with me?

MR. NEWBURY, the undertaker enters.

OLD JOE

Ah Mr. Newbury – evening sir – what brings you out on a cold night like this?

MR. NEWBURY

Business.

OLD JOE

Music to me ears sir. Music to me ears. We are always open for business eh...ha, ha. No matter what the season – no matter what the reason – there’s always money to be made. Just like your profession sir – I’m a 365 day a year enterprise. Death don’t take no holiday so why should we, eh? Now, what have you got for me?

MR. NEWBURY

I have only a few items, but they are of good quality.

OLD JOE

Alright then, bring them over. Let’s have a look.

MR. NEWBURY is bumped forward by the entrance of MRS. DILBER.

MRS. DILBER

Oh dear, I’m sorry sir.

MR. NEWBURY

That’s quite all right mam.

SCROOGE

That’s Mrs. Dilber. What’s she doing here?

MRS. DILBER

Oh, ha, ha, ha. Mr. Newbury...I didn't see you there.

MR. NEWBURY

Ha, ha, ha, Mrs. Dilber.

MRS DILBER

Merry Christmas to you.

MR. NEWBURY

Yes, Merry Christmas. Fancy us meeting up here.

MRS. DILBER

If I'd known you was coming here we could have split a cab ride I spose – eh?

They laugh.

MR. NEWBURY

Yes. Although, I do not make this a common practice Mrs. Dilber, but with certain clients one needs to cover expenses. I would prefer that we keep this a secret between us.

MRS. DILBER

Of course Mr. Newbury, I understand completely. I don't begrudge you for what you do. Every person has a right to take care of themselves they have.

MR. NEWBURY

Very true.

MRS. DILBER

He did.

MR. NEWBURY

No man more so.

MRS. DILBER

And who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose.

MR. NEWBURY

They are of no use to him now.

OLD JOE

Alright then, alright, come on, time's money. You two can prattle away on your own time – not mine. Now who wants to go first?

MR. NEWBURY

Ladies first.

MRS. DILBER

Oh no Mr. Newbury, you were here first and you should go first.

MR. NEWBURY

Very well.

MR. NEWBURY takes a small bundle and unwraps it. It contains a seal or two, a pencil case, a pair of cuff links, and a brooch.

OLD JOE

Lets see – high quality eh...that's what you said.

MR. NEWBURY

Yes. That's a very fine pencil case.

OLD JOE

There's a lot of these around – not worth as much as they used to be.

MR. NEWBURY

And those cufflinks are pure gold.

OLD JOE

Plated I think, and if you think different you can take them back. Okay – well that's not really worth much of anything. I could make a bob or two on this...lets see. That it then?

MR. NEWBURY

That's it.

OLD JOE

I'll give ya 12 bob for the lot and I wouldn't give another sixpence, even if I was to be boiled in oil for not doing it. That's a fair price Mr. Newbury.

MR. NEWBURY

Is it, indeed?

OLD JOE

That it is. Now, lets see what you've got dearie.

MRS. DILBER tosses her bundle up on the desk. OLD JOE starts to open the bundle.

MRS. DILBER

Here you go Joe.

OLD JOE

What's this then? Bed curtains?

MRS. DILBER

Aye! Bed-curtains. And very fine – very nice ones too.

OLD JOE

These are nice...feel that...very good quality. Very nice. So, how did you come by these then...did you take 'em down, rings and all, with him lying right there?

MRS. DILBER

Yes I did. And why not? Why shouldn't I take em – if I can – I'm just looking out for me-self – why should I care about him – he never gave a care about me – why shouldn't I take his bed curtains? He owed me.

OLD JOE

Alright dearie, alright dearie, you don't need to defend your actions to me. What's this then? His blankets?

MRS. DILBER

Of course they're his blankets. Whose else would they be? He isn't likely to catch cold without 'em.

OLD JOE

He didn't die of anything catching did he?

MRS. DILBER

If he had I certainly wouldn't have come near him.

OLD JOE

Oh now, look at this – this is very fine work – very high quality.

OLD JOE takes a shirt and examines it.

MRS. DILBER

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

OLD JOE

What do you mean wasted it?

MRS. DILBER

They was going to bury him in it. But I took it off him. If calico ain't good enough for being buried in, it ain't good enough for anything.

OLD JOE

Much easier to get things off the corpse before it's buried – if you know what I mean Mrs. Dilber.

They laugh.

MRS. DILBER

Right you are, and if he hadn't frightened every one away from him when he was alive, he'd of had somebody there to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying there all alone gasping out his last breath.

MR. NEWBURY

Truer words have never been spoken. It was a judgement upon him.

OLD JOE

Alright here you go dearie – this is more than fair. I always give too much to the ladies. It's bound to be my downfall.

MRS. DILBER

Thank you Joe.

SCROOGE

Spirit! I see. I see the lesson you are trying to teach me. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way now, but if I am to change then this terrible ending need not be...I will not die alone and unloved...I am most grateful to you – thank you very much – I have learned my lesson and now I wish to return home.

End Scene

SCENE vii: THE UNDERTAKERS

The scene changes to a room with a pine box coffin lying on a stand with the lid propped against one side. SCROOGE and the THIRD SPIRIT stand some distance from the coffin and cannot see in it.

SCROOGE

This is not my home...oh, merciful Heaven, what place is this? Where have you brought me, now?

The SPIRIT points to the box.

SCROOGE

Ohhh, is this the man whose funeral none will attend?

The SPIRIT nods.

SCROOGE

Do I know this man?

The SPIRIT points to the coffin but SCROOGE does not approach.

SCROOGE

Spirit, this is a terrible place. I do not want to stay. Let us leave here now and in leaving it I shall not leave its lesson unlearned, trust me. Let us go!

The SPIRIT points to the coffin but SCROOGE still does not move.

MR. NEWBURY the funeral director enters the room and takes the lid and places it on the coffin. SCROOGE moves closer to the box.

SCROOGE

I understand what you want and I would look, if I could. But I do not the strength to face what is in that box.

MR. NEWBURY nails the coffin lid shut.

SCROOGE

Spirit, tell me, is there no man, woman, or child to grieve for this man? To offer a kind word? To feel some emotion at his passing.

The SPIRIT lowers its hand.

SCROOGE

Oh Spirit, if there is any person in this town who feels anything because of this man's death please show that person to me, Spirit, I beg of you!

The SPIRIT moves off and SCROOGE follows.

End Scene

SCENE viii: THOMAS & CAROLINE's HOME

THOMAS enters the home. HE is happy but feels guilty about the happiness he feels.

CAROLINE

You were gone so long that I was worried.

THOMAS

Yes, well I'm back now my dear and I have some very good news.

SCROOGE

Who are these people? I don't know them. Are they any relation to the man that died?

The THIRD SPIRIT points to the couple.

CAROLINE

Tell me what has happened?

THOMAS

What has happened is: we are not to be ruined. He is dead.

CAROLINE

Dead!

The two laugh and hug.

THOMAS

Yes.

CAROLINE

Oh Thomas this is – as you say – although I regret to repeat it – good news.

THOMAS

Very good news.

CAROLINE

For us, God forgive me.

THOMAS

That cleaning woman I told you about last night that turned me away when I tried to see him and get a weeks delay was telling the truth. He was ill – and not only ill – but dying.

CAROLINE

To whom will our debt be transferred?

THOMAS

I don't know. But this gives us some time and when our debt is transferred we shall be ready with the money.

CAROLINE

And even if we're not it's very unlikely that we'll be dealing with so merciless and cruel a creditor in his successor as he was.

THOMAS

Yes, we may sleep well tonight with light hearts. He is gone and his shadow will no longer haunt our days.

SCROOGE

You show me this...this is not what I asked to see...can you not show me some tenderness connected with death...some grief for a soul that walked this earth.

The THIRD SPIRIT moves off and SCROOGE follows.

End Scene

SCENE ix: BOB CRATCHIT's HOME

PETER is reading from the bible. JUSTIN and ABBY sit listening. BELINDA and MRS. CRATCHET are working on their knitting.

SCROOGE

Oh Spirit no. No. No. No. Please spirit...no...not Tiny Tim.

The THIRD SPIRIT points to the family.

PETER

The Lord is my Shepard; I shall not want.
He maketh me lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

PETER stops reading. BELINDA takes the bible from her brother and continues. MRS. CRATCHIT puts down her knitting.

BELINDA

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

PETER and BELINDA

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

MRS. CRATCHIT joins in with PETER & BELINDA

Thou prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Very nice Peter. What a fine voice you have. Very nice Belinda. You two must read to your father when he gets home.

PETER & BELINDA

Yes, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT

He is very late. It is well past his time.

BELINDA

He seems to walk so much slower these last few evenings, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Yes, but I have known him to walk very fast with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

PETER

And so have I. Often.

BELINDA

And so have I.

ABBY

Me too.

MRS. CRATCHIT

But he was very light to carry, and your father loved him so, that it was no trouble; no trouble, at all. Ah, at last there is your father at the door.

BOB enters

BOB

Hello my dears.

JUSTIN

Hello father.

ABBY

Father.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I am so glad you are home.

BOB

As am I. What have you been up to my dear?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Peter has been reading to us and Belinda and I have been doing our knitting. We have been waiting for you.

BOB

Oh, I'm sorry my dear. You shouldn't wait for me.

MRS. CRATCHIT

No, no, no, we'll take our tea together. What took you so long Robert?

BOB

I was making some final arrangements my dear. I wish you could have come. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. How peaceful. But you'll see it often. We all will. We shall go there on Sundays won't we my dears.

BELINDA

Yes, father.

ABBY

Yes.

PETER

Every Sunday, father.

BOB

Yes, every Sunday. My little child. My little, little child.

JUSTIN

Don't be sad father.

ABBY

We love you.

BOB

Of that, I am certain of, my dears.

The children surround BOB and give him kisses and hugs.

BOB

Do you know I ran into Mr. Scrooge's nephew on my way to the Church and seeing that I was not myself he asked what had happened to upset me so. I am heartily sorry for your loss, Mr. Cratchit he said, and heartily sorry for your good wife. Though, how he knew that, I do not know.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Knew what, my dear?

BOB

Why, that you are a good wife.

PETER

Everybody knows that.

BOB

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 Pray come see me."

MRS. CRATCHIT

I'm sure he's a good soul.

BOB

You would be sure of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. He is as kind-hearted and loving as his Uncle Scrooge is cold-hearted and bitter. I shouldn't be at all surprised – mark what I say – if he got Peter a better situation.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Hear that, Peter?

BELINDA

And then Peter will be keeping company with someone, and setting up for himself.

PETER

And what's wrong with that?

BOB

Not a thing, you're a handsome fellow and good man, Peter.

MRS. CRATCHIT

And one of these days, if you're lucky, you'll meet someone nice that you'll want to spend your life with.

BOB

Very true my dear, though there's plenty of time for that. And I do hope that in the years to come, however and whenever we part from one another, for whatever reason, I am quite certain that none of us will forget our little Tiny Tim – shall we – and this first parting among us.

ALL

Never, father!

BOB

And I know, I know, my dears, that when we remember how patient and how kind he was; even though he was only a little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget our little Tim in doing it.

ALL

No, never, father!

BOB

I am very happy. I am so very...very...happy!

The family gathers around BOB and huddle together in their grief.

SCROOGE

I do not belong here...I should not be here...I should let this poor family grieve in peace. Oh Spirit, I sense our parting is at hand, although I do not know why – can you not tell me who was that man we saw lying dead?

The THIRD SPIRIT turns and SCROOGE follows.

End Scene

SCENE x: CHURCHYARD

A large unmarked tombstone looms out of the darkness. Beneath the tombstone lies a pine box. Fog drifts among the tombstones.

SFX WHISPERING SPIRITS CALLING EBENEZER SCROOGE

SCROOGE

Spirit, 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 shadows of things that may be, only?

The THIRD SPIRIT points to the grave. The coffin opens.

SCROOGE

Yes, men's actions foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered, they must lead. But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Is this not true? Answer me, who lies buried here – what fate awaits me?

The name EBENEZER SCROOGE appears across the gravestone.

SCROOGE

Oh, no spirit! It is as I feared, no! Please have mercy...I am not the man I was.

Great chains emerge from the grave and begin to wrap themselves around SCROOGE and drag him towards the open coffin.

SCROOGE

Why show me this, if I am past all hope? Assure me that I may yet change the shadows you have shown me, by an altered life. No, no, no please...I beg of you...forgive me spirit...forgive me...and I will honour Christmas in my heart. I will not shut out the lessons of this night. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

SCROOGE is pulled into the coffin. The lid slams shut.

End Scene

SCENE xi: SCROOGE'S BED CHAMBER

SCROOGE appears in the bed thrashing and tossing and turning until he realizes that he is in his own bed.

SCROOGE

No, Spirit...please...forgive me I am a changed man...a changed man...oh...where am I. Oh my word...ha, ha, ha, I am in my own bed. Oh thank the Lord. Thank the Lord, I am in my own bed and I am alive! I am alive! Oh, here it is Christmas morning and I am alive.

SCROOGE gets out of his bed and falls to his knees in thanks.

SCROOGE

Ha, ha, ha, I am not dead...Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Spirits of Christmas be praised...I say it on my knees Jacob – on my knees. I am alive. Ha ha ha.

SCROOGE gives a great sigh of relief and falls back on the floor as MRS. DILBER comes in with a breakfast tray. She stops when she sees SCROOGE lying on the floor laughing.

MRS. DILBER

Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Mrs. Dilber!

MRS. DILBER

Are you quite alright Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE jumps to his feet.

SCROOGE

Oh, yes Mrs. Dilber. Ha, ha, ha! I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. Ha, ha, ha. I am as giddy as a drunken man. Ha ha ha. How wonderful to see you. And look at that – you have not torn down my bed curtains rings and all. They are here! I am here! You are here! The shadows of things that would have been – will not be. I will make certain of that!

MRS. DILBER

Will you sir.

SCROOGE

Oh yes! I say, there's the mirror, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered!

MRS. DILBER

The ghost of Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE

And here's where the Ghost of Christmas Past – long past – no my past – appeared. Ha, ha, ha.

MRS. DILBER

Did it sir?

SCROOGE

And here's the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! Ha ha ha!

SCROOGE looks at MRS. DILBER. She looks at him and then screams and runs around the room with SCROOGE chasing her trying to catch her and calm her down.

MRS. DILBER

Ahhhhh!

SCROOGE

Oh, I'm sorry – I'm sorry Mrs. Dilber. Calm yourself. I do not mean to scare you.

MRS. DILBER

I don't know what you're talking about Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE

I'm talking about Christmas Mrs. Dilber. The joy of the season. I'm sorry if I frightened you.

MRS. DILBER

Here Mr. Scrooge, are you quite alright? You are acting a bit peculiar and – forgive me for saying so – but maybe you should have your head examined.

SCROOGE

You're quite right, maybe I should – what a good idea – I wonder what they'd find in it?
Ha, ha, ha!

MRS. DILBER

I'll fetch the doctor, shall I.

SCROOGE

No, no, no. No need, I'm quite sane. Now run along home to your family. What are you doing here with me on Christmas morning? What horrible old penny-pincher would make you work on Christmas Day?

MRS. DILBER

Why, you would Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

I would – that's true I would – ha, ha, ha – but I won't any longer. Here's a pound note for you to take and spend on you and your family this Christmas!

MRS. DILBER

A whole pound!

SCROOGE

Oh, yes.

MRS. DILBER

Are you sure? That's a lot of money that is.

SCROOGE

Oh, I'm very sure.

MRS. DILBER

Why thank you Mr. Scrooge. That is most kind and generous of you. Thank you.

SCROOGE

Merry Christmas, Mrs. Dilber.

MRS. DILBER

Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge. Are you sure you're quite alright?

SCROOGE

Oh yes, never better. Ha, ha, ha.

MRS. DILBER exits

SCROOGE throws open his window and stand in the window.

SCROOGE

A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Ha, ha, ha. Hallo there! Hello! You there boy.

BOY (Off)

Hello!

SCROOGE

Do you know the Butchers in the next street but one, at the corner?

BOY (Off)

I do.

SCROOGE

Ah, an intelligent boy! Do you know whether or not they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging there? Not the little prize Turkey – the big one?

BOY (Off)

The one as big as me?

SCROOGE

What a delightful boy. Yes, that one!

BOY (Off)

It's hanging there still.

SCROOGE

Is it? Good. Go and buy it.

BOY (Off)

Go buy it? Are you off your nut?

SCROOGE

Ha, ha, ha. No, no, no. I am not off my nut – good Heavens – I am in earnest – I assure you. Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, so that I can tell them where to take 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 (Off)

Yes sir!

SCROOGE

Ha, ha, ha. Look at him go.

The BOY runs off.

SCROOGE

I'll send it to Bob Cratchit! He won't know who sent it. Ha,ha, ha. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Oh, I don't deserve to be so happy! But I am. I can't help it. Ha, ha, ha. What to do? What to do? A whole day – a whole day to spend celebrating the season! Ha, ha, ha!

End Scene

SCENE xii: A LONDON STREET

It is Christmas Day and the street is filled with people. There is a group singing Christmas Carols and people rushing by with presents. There is lots of laughter and conversation and SCROOGE is enjoying all the activities and greeting people.

SCROOGE

Good morning to you. Merry Christmas. A Merry Christmas to you!

SCROOGE see's MR. GRANGER and approaches him.

SCROOGE

My dear sir, how are you?

MR. GRANGER

Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A Merry Christmas to you sir!

MR. GRANGER

You are Mr. Scrooge, aren't you?

SCROOGE

Yes, that is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon, I would like to make a donation to your fund.

SCROOGE whispers into his ear.

MR. GRANGER

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

SCROOGE

If you please, not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?

MR. GRANGER

My dear sir, I don't know what to say to such generosity.

SCROOGE

Don't say anything. And do include my partner Jacob Marley's name on the donation if you please. This was all his doing you see.

MR. GRANGER

Well whose ever doing it was I thank you very much Mr. Scrooge. You have helped us exceed our goal by much more than we could have imagined. Thank you, sir.

BELLE and DICK enter the street.

SCROOGE

It is I who must thank you. And ummm (*Scrooge see's Belle & DICK*) ummm I have some ideas about creating a Merchant Association to raise funds for the poor throughout the year.

MR. GRANGER

Oh, well that would be a wonderful gesture.

SCROOGE

Yes, you must come and see me and we can discuss this further.

MR. GRANGER

Yes, Mr. Scrooge. Thank you. Merry Christmas.

MR. SCROOGE

Merry Christmas, my good man! Thank you very much. I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times, bless you.

SCROOGE approaches BELLE and DICK. At first they don't see him but then they turn in his direction. SCROOGE is overjoyed to see them.

SCROOGE

My word Belle!

BELLE

Ebenezer!

SCROOGE

Yes! It is I! Oh Belle, I am so glad to see you.

SCROOGE runs forward and picks BELLE up and twirls her around and sets her down laughing!

BELLE

Ebenezer!

SCROOGE

I'm so sorry that was most inappropriate of me. I am just so overwhelmed to see you again after so many years. This is a day filled with blessings. How are you my dear?

BELLE

Well.

SCROOGE gives DICK a hearty hand shake.

SCROOGE

And Dick, Dick Wilkens, my good friend – how long it has been since I've called you that.

DICK

Um, yes.

SCROOGE

And how is your family?

BELLE

Well.

DICK

Yes, very well.

SCROOGE

I am glad to hear it – it has been too long. We must not be strangers, eh. Here we are living in the same city and we do not spend any time together. Well, that will never do. I think that you and Dick must come see me and we must have a good visit and you can tell me all about your dear family. How does that sound? I do wish us to remain friends if you will allow it.

BELLE and DICK look at each other.

BELLE

Of course we will.

DICK

Of course Ebenezer. Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE

Yes, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It is so good to see you.

DICK and BELLE exit.

The CAROLERS start to sing and SCROOGE claps along enjoying the song.

CAROLERS

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

GOOD TIDINGS FOR CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

SCROOGE

Ah, ah very nice – very beautiful. Merry Christmas.

MR. BENTLEY enters

MR. BENTLEY

Ah, Mr. Scrooge I was just on my way to your office.

SCROOGE

Well, you may go to my office, but you won't find me there.

MR. BENTLEY

Uh, no Mr. Scrooge...of course not...you are here.

SCROOGE

I most certainly am.

MR. BENTLEY

Well then, maybe we can walk back together.

SCROOGE

What? And work on Christmas Day!

MR. BENTLEY

What is Christmas Day to you sir?

SCROOGE

Oh, it's not the day, it's the spirit my friend. The Spirit of Christmas – that I celebrate today and every day. You should try it!

MR. BENTLEY

I don't think I'll try any such thing, sir.

SCROOGE

No?

MR. BENTLEY

No.

SCROOGE

Oh, what a shame. Well Mr. Bentley, I happened to belong to a group of business men that are raising a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth at this festive time of year and I would be most pleased if you would make a donation.

MR. BENTLEY

Uh, Mr. Scrooge I don't make merry myself at Christmas...

SCROOGE

...and I can't afford to make idle people merry. Yes, yes I've heard it all – said it all – and it's all a bunch of codswallop.

MR. BENTLEY

I think I will have to reconsider doing business with you Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

That is up to you entirely Mr. Bentley, but in the meantime, why don't you donate that hundred pounds you made yesterday?

MR. BENTLEY

Mr. Scrooge have you lost your mind?

SCROOGE

You're not the first one to accuse me of losing my mind today and you probably won't be the last but that is no reason for you not to donate. You can afford it.

MR. BENTLEY

If I was to give away my money to anyone who asked for it – it would not be long before I found myself in the poor house. Good day, sir.

MR. BENTLY turns to leave.

SCROOGE

Merry Christmas.

MR. BENTLEY

Bah!

SCROOGE

And a happy New Year!

MR. BENTLEY

Humbug!

SCROOGE

Humbug indeed. Ha, ha, ha. He'll take some work, that one. Oh dear, look at the time. I must hurry.

End Scene

SCENE xiii: FRED'S HOME

FRED's home is decorated for Christmas and looks identical to the scene we saw when SCROOGE was there with the SECOND SPIRIT.

EMMA
Is it living?

FRED
Yes.

TOPPER
Is it an animal?

FRED
Oh yes.

COUSIN HERB
Is it a cow? Mooooo!

FRED
No.

EMMA
Does it live in the country?

FRED
No.

EMMA
In the city then?

FRED
Yes.

TOPPER
Does it growl?

FRED
Oh, yes.

ROSE
Is it a dog?

COUSIN HERB
Woof woof!

FRED
No.

TOPPER
A cat?

FRED
No

EMMA
A rat?

FRED
Uh, no.

COUSIN HERB
Is it a horse?

FRED
No.

TOPPER
A jackass!

COUSIN HERB
Heehaw!

FRED
Yes and no.

EMMA
Oh, I know what it is, Fred! I know it!

FRED

What is it?

The door to the dining room opens and SCROOGE enters just as ROSE shouts.

EMMA & SCROOGE

It's your Uncle Scrooge!

The room turns and looks and is stunned for the moment and then there is an uneasy laugh and then FRED steps forward.

FRED

Why bless my soul, so it is! Uncle.

SCROOGE

Fred, I have come to dinner if you will still have me.

FRED

Of course Uncle, I am so glad that you are here. Pray what changed your mind?

SCROOGE

The Ghost of Jacob Marley changed my mind. The spirit of Christmas – past present and future changed my mind. Your words changed my mind, Fred. You're right. Christmas is a kind, forgiving, and charitable time. A time when men and women open their hearts and think of their fellow man. A time for mercy, charity, and benevolence. And so, in the memory of your dear mother, I will honour Christmas and keep it all the year – and I say along with you, God bless it!

FRED

Oh, Uncle I could not be happier.

EMMA

Welcome Uncle.

SCROOGE

Bless you. Bless you all.

End Scene

SCENE xiv: SCROOGE & MARLEY's

SCROOGE is peaking out the window happily humming, We Wish You a Merry Christmas. He breaks into song as he keeps an eye out for BOB CRATCHIT.

SCROOGE

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
GOOD TIDINGS FOR CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

SCROOGE sees BOB running down the street. SCROOGE hops back up on his desk and tries to stop giggling and takes a stern appearance. BOB hurries into the office and takes off his hat and hops up on his chair at his desk and gets right to work. SCROOGE lets out some muffled giggles. He looks up at BOB

SCROOGE

Mr. Cratchit.

BOB

Yes, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

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

BOB

I am very sorry, sir. I am behind my time.

SCROOGE

You are? Yes, I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.

BOB

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

SCROOGE

Were you?

BOB

Yes.

SCROOGE

Eating lots of turkey no doubt!

BOB

Why yes, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Plum pudding?

BOB

Yes.

SCROOGE

Sounds like quite the feast, but even so that is no excuse for being late and I am not going to stand for this sort of thing any longer Mr. Cratchit and therefore I have no choice but to triple your salary!

Pause

BOB

I'm sorry, did you say triple my salary?

SCROOGE

Yes.

BOB

My salary?

SCROOGE

Your salary.

BOB

Are you quite yourself Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

I have never been more myself. A merry Christmas, Bob! A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll triple your salary, and assist your

struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, my friend, over a cup of Christmas cider at the Nags Head Pub! How does that sound?

BOB

Very good, Mr. Scrooge. Thank you.

SCROOGE

Now I want you to go buy more coal before you dot another I, Bob Cratchit. Let's make up the fires and warm this place up.

BOB

Yes, Mr. Scrooge.

BOB grabs the coal- scuttle and heads out.

SCROOGE

Ah, Christmas time be praised. Thank you Jacob, may ye yet find some peace. Merry Christmas to all.

The rest of the CAST enter stage as FRED moves forward and speaks his final lines to the audience. Tiny Tim comes on stage and Scrooge hoists him on his shoulder. BOB and the rest of the Cratchits stand beside SCROOGE. The cast moves down and surrounds FRED as he speaks.

FRED

And do you know my Uncle Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all and much more. And to Tiny Tim, who I'm happy to say, did not die, he was a second father. Scrooge became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city of London knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. And from that time on it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us all. And so, as Tiny Tim observed,

ALL

God bless us, every one!

END PLAY