

A CHRISTMAS YARN

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All songs Words and Music by Rob Howard

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(Inside the ugly Christmas sweater factory, it's beautifully decorated with Christmas trees, lights, stockings, etc. To one side of the stage, slightly secluded, is Sam Ebenezer's office area. Sam's office has a door to the outside on one wall and on the opposite wall a door into the factory part of the set. As the song begins, the factory workers happily congregate on the stage.)

(music begins to "It's the Busiest Time of Year")

(dialogue at meas. 52)

(Carole wanders downstage looking a little confused. She is holding a piece of paper and a small briefcase. She sees Bob Cratchit is walking across stage purposefully, head down, reading a clipboard. Carole steps in front of him to ask him a question and he almost bumps into her.)

CAROLE: Hello! I'm starting work here today, and I'm looking for my new boss, Bob Cratchit.

BOB: You must be Carole! I'm Bob, the head of the weaving department. We really need you, we're up against a major deadline tonight.

(They shake hands.)

CAROLE: Good to meet you, Mr. Cratchit!

BOB: Actually, for legal reasons, my name is pronounced *Crochet*. Welcome to the family!

CAROLE: Thank you! I can't believe I get to work at the world-famous sweater factory!

BOB: That's us ... Unique Gifts from Luxurious Yarns.

CAROLE: *(thinking)* U ... G ... L ... Y ... that spells ... ugly.

BOB: That's right, we're the biggest manufacturer of ugly Christmas sweaters in the world!

SONG: "It's the Busiest Time of Year"

SCENE 1

(At the conclusion of the song, workers start to settle into their work stations and Sam goes to her desk.)

CAROLE: *(looking around at the building)* **It's funny, all growing up, I loved this building because of the beautiful cobblestone road leading up to it, and because it was always decorated like Christmas! But I never knew what you did here.**

BOB: **Well, to create the ugly sweaters, we do everything from raising the sheep, to sheering the wool, to spinning the yarn, to weaving the cloth.**


CAROLE: **That would explain the sheep pen next to the factory.**

BOB: **It's all about authenticity, and of course, taking it *waaay* over the top!**

CAROLE: **But that's all you, I mean we, make? Ugly Christmas sweaters?**

BOB: **Oh, we dabbled in fruitcake, but that was a disaster.**

(Bob produces a foil-wrapped item and drops it on the floor. It makes a loud thud.)

 **SOUNDFX – “Fruitcake Thud”**

BOB: **See? We got stuck with 10,000 we couldn't sell. And you can't throw them away because they aren't biodegradable.**

CAROLE: **What did you do with all of them?**

BOB: **Well, that cobblestone road you love that leads to the factory?**

CAROLE: **Yes?**

BOB: **Those aren't cobblestones.**


(At this moment, they are interrupted by an announcement by Belle who gets up on a small stool or crate to be seen, and the entire factory quiets to listen.)

BELLE: **Everyone! Everyone! Our founder and president needs no introduction. She is our inspiration and our friend. I give you ... Samantha Ebenezer!**

(Everyone cheers and applauds.)

SAM: Thank you, Belle. Friends, as you know I’ve devoted my life to this company, as my parents did and my grandparents before them. Never once has an Ebenezer missed a deadline, failed to deliver an order, or dropped a stitch in one of our world-famous ugly Christmas sweaters. So, I just wanted to say “thank you” for the extra work to get this urgent order, *our largest order ever*, out the door on Christmas Eve. When it’s finished, we’ll throw a huge Christmas party.

(Employees cheer, but then we hear the sound of frantic sheep bleating offstage. Tiny Tom comes running in from offstage, a frightened look on his face.)

 **SOUNDFX** – “*Sheep Bleating*”

BOB: What’s going on Tiny Tom?

TOM: I’m sorry to interrupt, but there’s a sheep caught in the weaving machine.

(Everyone groans.)

BELLE: Again?

TOM: *(embarrassed)* Yes.

BOB: *(with compassion)* We’ve talked about this Tiny Tom; first you *shear* the sheep, *then* you put the wool in the weaving machine. The *sequence* is important.

TOM: *(memorizing)* Right! Weaving machine first, sheep shearing second.

BELLE: No.

TOM: Oh right. Shearing first.

SAM: Someone help Tom get the poor sheep out of the machine and make sure it’s alright. Then, after the order is shipped, the party starts!

(Cheers from the group, which then go back to work. Someone leaves with Tiny Tom to free the poor sheep.)

BOB: Sam, this is Carole, our new employee who’s here to help us weave these sweaters and get them out the door.

SAM: Nice to meet you, Carole. Thank you for coming in on Christmas Eve.

CAROLE: No problem.

SAM: Humbug!

(At the sound of the word “humbug,” a frenetic assistant to Sam, Humbug, runs in from off stage. Humbug carries a tablet computer and has a pencil over her ear like an accountant.)

HUMBUG: You called?

SAM: Carole, this is my assistant, Humbug.

CAROLE: Hello, Humbug! Merry Christmas.

SAM: Humbug, would you fill us in on the latest sales data? I have to make sure we’re tracking with our projections. Carole, for generations, no one in my family has ever missed their Christmas projections. Every year our sales go up, up, up!

(Humbug frantically taps and swipes the tablet to come up with the instant answer to Sam’s question.)

HUMBUG: (reading) It appears that we’re tracking, Boss. The final order we have to get out tonight will put us over the top ... once again exceeding expectations!

(music begins to “The Ugly Sweater Business”)

BOB: Wonderful news, Sam. Why don’t I get Carole started and we’ll get this final order out the door.

CAROLE: Perfect!

HUMBUG: Carole, welcome to the team and welcome to the ugly sweater business!

(dialogue at meas. 12)

CAROLE: I love your sweater!

BELLE: Oh, *this* little thing? It’s just something I threw on.

CAROLE: (fawning) Don’t be modest, it’s stunning! It’s just so, so ...

BELLE: Ugly?

CAROLE: Yes!

BELLE: You’re just saying that!

CAROLE: **No, it’s *really* horrible!**

BELLE: **You’re so sweet!**

CAROLE: **You must, must tell me where you got it!**

BELLE: **Why, right here, of course!**

(dialogue at meas. 28)

BOB: **Everyone! We just received a certified letter from *Phashion Magazine!***

BELLE: ***The Phashion Magazine?***

BOB: **Yes!**

HUMBUG: **Don’t keep us in suspense! What did they say?**

BOB: *(clears his throat and reads)* **“For the tenth year in a row, your sweaters have been named the *ugliest* sweaters in America!”**

(Everyone cheers.)

BOB: **You should all be so proud!**

SONG: “The Ugly Sweater Business”

SCENE 2

(At the conclusion of the song, we hear blizzard sounds outside.)

 **SOUNDFX** – “Blizzard”

SAM: **How wonderful! Snow on Christmas Eve!**

HUMBUG: **That’s a blizzard, Boss ... could be a problem.**

BOB: *(to Carole)* **So, you’ve seen the looms and the weaving machines where we make the yarn and knit the cloth, and the sewing machines where we put them all together. What do you think so far?**

CAROLE: **I think that poor sheep was terrified. *(pause)* Mr. Cratchit ...**

BOB: ***Crochet.***

CAROLE: **How do you know when a sweater is truly ugly? Or how ugly it is?**

BOB: **Good question. We are able to calibrate how ugly a sweater is by comparing it to a sweater considered to be the ugliest Christmas sweater ever. It was found at the turn of the 19th century. We keep it preserved. It’s a masterpiece.**

(Bob calls to a worker offstage.)

BOB: **Bruno! The ugly sweater. Bring it.**

BRUNO: *(offstage)* **The ugly sweater? Are you sure?**

BOB: **Bring it!**

(Bruno enters carrying a small antique trunk. The top of the trunk is closed. Bruno wears huge fireproof gloves and small welder’s goggles for protection. Bob hands a similar pair of goggles to Carole as Bruno arrives. Two workers come forward to hold the trunk as Bob unlatches several latches and dons huge welder’s gloves.)

BOB: **You’ll need to wear these goggles, Carole. Everyone, avert your eyes!**

(All the workers turn their heads and cover their eyes as Bob carefully opens the trunk wearing fireproof gloves. The lid is hinged on the audience side so the audience can’t see the contents. A sickening green glow emanates from the box. Bruno turns away and shields his eyes. Carole puts her arm across her face dramatically.)

CAROLE: **It's ... it's ... horrible!**

BOB: **Thank you. Take it away, Bruno.**

(The lid is quickly closed and Bruno exits with the trunk.)

SAM: **Humbug?**

HUMBUG: **Yes?**

SAM: **Do you think we can get this order out tonight?**

HUMBUG: *(swiping on her tablet)* **The order is for 8,104 and we have 278 ready. All systems are go, Boss. Are you worried?**

SAM: **Well ... maybe a little. No one in my family has ever ...**

HUMBUG: **I know ... has ever missed a deadline, failed to deliver an order, or dropped a stitch in one of our world-famous ugly Christmas sweaters. You won't either.**

(At that moment, lightning and thunder occur simultaneously, and for a few seconds, the lights are off.)



SOUNDFX – “Lightning and Thunder 1”

HUMBUG: **The power is out!**

(The lights then immediately come back on.)

HUMBUG: **Never mind! It's back on!**

BELLE: **No, it's not, those are the emergency lights. They are battery powered.**

SAM: **Very well then. *(to the assembled employees)* We're going to have to make do if we are to get this order out tonight.**

CAROLE: **Do you think we still have a chance of making the deadline, Sam?**

SAM: **Well, I've got good news and bad news.**

BELLE: **What's the bad news?**

(music begins to “Christmas Is Coming”)

SAM: **Christmas is coming.**

BELLE: **And the good news?**

SAM: **Christmas is coming!**

SONG: “Christmas Is Coming”

SCENE 3


(The storm still rages outside. As Sam retreats to her office to doze at her desk with her head down, the factory workers excitedly wheel in the covered “bicycle-generator” and gather around it.)

BOB: *(yelling in the direction of Sam’s office)* **Hey boss! I think we’ve got an idea that might work. We’re going to make our own electricity!**

(Bob whips off the blanket and reveals the “bicycle-generator.” Everyone cheers.)

HUMBUG: *(to Bob)* **Shhhhh! Sam is taking a power nap. Needs all her energy for the final push. Show me what you’ve done.**

(Bob proceeds to get on the “bicycle-generator” and demonstrate how it works as everyone watches excitedly. Eventually, some additional hand items are also presented: an “egg beater” generator and boxes with cranks. As the workers are occupied with this activity, the focus shifts to Sam’s office where she is startled awake by a knock at the door. A figure in a robe with a hood enters as Sam opens the door.)

 **SOUNDFX – “Knocking 1”**

SAM: **Ahhhh! Who are you? Have you come to tell me my fate, that I’ll be the only Ebenezer to miss a deadline?**

(The figure answers mysteriously from inside the hood.)

MARLO: **I am here for you Samantha Ebenezer! I’m here to spin yarns!**

SAM: **Spin yarns? Are you a Visitor of Christmas Past here to weave terrifying tales that are about to come true?**

(Marlo pulls her hood down and shakes snow off her robe, which is actually just an elaborate winter cape.)

MARLO: **What are you talking about?**

SAM: **You said you’re here to spin yarns ... about my life?**

MARLO: *(taking off the cape now)* **No, I’m here to spin wool. I’m Marlo Jacobs, I’m a weaver. Yes, I said I’m coming to “spin yarn” ... to help you make the rest of your sweaters without power.**

SAM: **You're sure.**

MARLO: **Sure, I'm sure. I just got out of church and got a call and started right over. The choir was just singing the story of Christmas ... how the birth of Jesus the Messiah was foretold by the prophets. I thought it was kind of prophetic when I got the call and thought I could spread some love and good cheer tonight too.**

SAM: **And what does the prophecy about the Messiah have to do with sweaters?**

MARLO: **Think about when you create a new design for a sweater ... before you start weaving, you first design the pattern. Someone watching the loom won't understand the design until they see the whole sweater, but *you* knew what it would look like before the weaving started. That's like God's story. He had a plan all along to give the world a Savior, and that's what Christmas is all about!**

SAM: **Why have you come to tell me this?**

MARLO: **I didn't. I came to weave sweaters. You asked me. Anyway, I'd better get started.**

(Sam turns away to her desk and as she does, Marlo leaves through the door into the factory to help with the weaving. When Sam turns back around Marlo is gone.)

SAM: **She vanished, just like an apparition! *Humbug!***

(Humbug runs in, followed by Bob, Carole and Belle.)

HUMBUG: **Oh, you're awake!**

SAM: **Humbug! I have been visited by an apparition!**

HUMBUG: **An appa-what?!**

SAM: **An apparition ... you know, a ghostly creature sent to teach me!**

HUMBUG: **Really?**

(Everyone looks around the room for the apparition.)

BOB: **I don't see anybody.**

SAM: **She called herself “Marlo Jacobs.” *(dramatically)* She spun a yarn of prophecy and Christmas. She said it shows how God had a design all along to send a Savior.**

HUMBUG: *(checking her tablet)* **That’s right, Boss! More than 700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

(music begins to “Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel”)

CAROLE: **Isaiah was predicting the first Christmas.**

BOB: **And he even told us who he would be in Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”**

SONG: “Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel”

SCENE 4

(Workers return to their work stations, taking turns turning the various hand cranks and peddling the bicycles to provide power. Tom enters from off stage, carrying a kite and a long loop of string, with a large credit-card-sized item tied to the string. He is dressed in a parka.)

BOB: Tom, what are you dressed for and what are you doing?

TOM: I'm going to get electricity for us. From the storm, using a kite and a key, like Ben Franklin!

BELLE: Pretty sure that's not how it works.

CAROLE: And what's that on the string?

TOM: It's a key.


CAROLE: That's a key card. For a hotel. It's plastic. It's also ... not metal.

TOM: So?

SAM: *(to Carole)* Don't even try Carole, it's best to just let him do it. I'm going back to my office and see if I can't solve this problem.

TOM: I'll be right back.

(Tom exits the factory. As Sam enters her office, she sits and soon hears an eerie, slow knocking on her door. She answers in a shaky voice.)

 **SOUNDFX** – “Knocking 2”

SAM: Wh-wh-who is it?

FUZZY: Samantha Ebenezer?

SAM: *(terrified)* Y-y-y-yes?

FUZZY: I'm here for you. I'm here to rescue you from darkness! But you must open the door!

(Sam freezes with big eyes like “this is not happening again!” Then she gets herself together.)

SAM: Okay, hold on. I'm not falling for that again! There are no ghosts. What's your name?

FUZZY: **I'm Fuzzy Wig. I'm with the power company. I'm here to try and restore light and power to your business!**

(Sam opens the door, and as she does, Fuzzy enters and shuts the door behind him. He wears a coat with a furry hood and an elaborate tool belt with extension cords looped around one or two shoulders.)

SAM: **What?! No one would come out on a terrible night like this!**

FUZZY: **Of course we come out on nights like this. I'm usually only needed when things are terrible. And I do it because I get to bring light to people in darkness.**

SAM: **Even on Christmas Eve?**

(Fuzzy begins to examine the room, looking for trouble. He continues working throughout his conversation with Sam.)

FUZZY: **Especially on Christmas Eve. I mean, when you think about it, Christmas is all about bringing light into the darkness of the world.**

SAM: **Another visitor on Christmas Eve. Is that the message you're bringing to me?**

FUZZY: **It's great to be able to turn on people's electricity when it goes out. I love my job! But, if you think about it, the whole world is in darkness because of sin.**

SAM: *(thinking)* **Isaiah ... "the people walking in darkness have seen a great light ... on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."**

FUZZY: **That's right! Jesus called Himself the Light of the World. When He was born in Bethlehem there were shepherds nearby, and there was so much light in the sky they were terrified! For somebody in my line of work, that's my favorite part of the Christmas story!**

(At that moment, simultaneous lightning and thunder erupt. Tom enters through the factory door. He is obviously charred and his kite is burned to a crisp. The key card is melted. As everyone runs to Tom, Fuzzy leaves through the office door to continue his work.)



SOUNDFX – "Lightning and Thunder 2"

SAM: **What happened to you?**

TOM: **I found electricity! It is not what I expected.**

SAM: You guys, there was another visitor here. He left before he could finish his tale about the light the shepherds saw! He said God brought light to the world when the Savior was born. Real light. And the shepherds saw it!

BELLE: That was the Glory of God, Sam.

(music begins to “Peace on Earth”)

BOB: It shone like the sun in the middle of the night. It was the announcement that God’s Son had been born on earth. And afterwards, the shepherds came to the manger to worship Jesus, the Light of the World.

SONG: “Peace on Earth”

SCENE 5

(At the end of “Peace on Earth,” Bob walks over to Sam, who is distracted by messages on her cell phone, as Humbug jumps up on a stool or crate and makes an excited announcement to everyone.)

HUMBUG: **Our order count is up to 3,446. (Everyone cheers.) We’re making progress!**

SAM: *(still distracted by her phone)* **What frog dress?**

(Humbug looks at Bob, confused at Sam’s answer. Bob shrugs.)

HUMBUG: **I mean, we’ve called in more weaving experts, so ...**

SAM: *(extremely distracted)* **No thank you, I just had a cup.**

BOB: **Sam, are you hungry? Do you want anything?**


SAM: **“Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men?”**

(The others walk over to Sam.)

BELLE: **Are you okay, Sam?**

CAROLE: **Maybe you should relax for a little while.**

(Everyone returns to their work stations as Sam walks back to her office, a little jumpy. As she arrives, there is a knock at the door and it opens. Yet a third person has arrived, appearing to be in a heavy jacket. A wool scarf covers most of her face. She enters with a hand cart or dolly full of boxes. Sam is startled, but not really surprised this time.)

 **SOUNDFX – “Knocking 3”**

SAM: *(pointing at the person)* **I knew it! I knew it! A third visitor! That’s how it is in the story!**

ANNA: **What? What story?**

SAM: ***A Christmas Carol.***

CAROLE: **What?**

SAM: **What do you mean, what?**

CAROLE: **You said, “A Christmas, Carole.”**

SAM: No, not Carole ... never mind.

(Turning her attention back to Anna.)

SAM: What is the purpose of this visit?

ANNA: Christmas Presents.

SAM: No, no. there is no Ghost of Christmas Present!

ANNA: I'm here to *deliver* Christmas presents. My name is Anna Zonn. I'm a deliverer.

(Anna starts inventorying and checking the boxes using a clipboard.)

SAM: So, you have a message for me, oh deliverer?

(Anna checks her clipboard.)

ANNA: Nope. Maybe tomorrow. Shipping is a little delayed due to the storm. And, of course, supply chain issues.

SAM: No! A story! A message! Do you have something prepared to tell me?

ANNA: Nothing planned.

SAM: Then, are you here to give me a sign?

ANNA: No, I need *you* to sign. I need you to sign saying you received these boxes.

(Sam ignores the clipboard and turns away.)

SAM: So, is there no hope for me?

ANNA: No hope? At Christmas?! Christmas is *all* about hope.

SAM: Are you the deliverer of hope?

ANNA: Nope. Just the deliverer of gifts. But ... Christmas *is* about gifts, in a way. The first Christmas gifts ever given were for Jesus and His family, given by wise men who traveled across the known world to honor Him.

(Anna then walks towards the door.)

ANNA: Gotta get another couple of boxes.

(Anna leaves through the office door. Sam picks up a box and looking at it, begins to think out loud as she exits her office and walks into the factory. Bob and Humbug walk up to her)

(music begins to “One Bright Star”)

SAM: *(processing)* **Gifts ... delivered ...**

HUMBUG: *(pointing to the boxes inside Sam’s office)* **Yes, I can see, Boss! Looks like a lot of them.**

SAM: **No, tell me about the gifts that were given to Jesus by the wise men?**

SONG: “One Bright Star”

SCENE 6

(At the end of the song, the lights in the factory flicker, go out, then go back on again.)

HUMBUG: **The power's on again!**

BELLE: **No, those are still just the emergency lights.**

(Everybody sighs.)

(Fuzzy walks in from offstage, wiping his hands with a towel.)

FUZZY: **No, those are the real lights. Your power is back on. The lightning did a number on your wiring.**

HUMBUG: **And on Tiny Tom.**

FUZZY: **Either way, it's sorted out. But your looms and weavers are working now, too.**

(Sam is beside herself with excitement.)

SAM: **Humbug!**

HUMBUG: **Right here, Boss.**

SAM: **What's the order count? We *have* to be close, maybe we can still finish!**

HUMBUG: **I have some good news, Boss! As of this moment we have completed 6,893 ugly sweaters!**

(Everybody cheers.)

BOB: **But I have some bad news. With only peddle power and mostly hand stitching, I'm afraid we weren't able to finish the order, Sam.**

(Everybody sighs.)

SAM: *(collapses, defeated)* **I knew it. We were so close! I'm the first Ebenezer to miss a Christmas deadline.**

HUMBUG: **It was out of our hands, Boss.**

(Anna returns to the factory area, pushing an empty hand cart.)

ANNA: I'm here to pick up the big Christmas order to be delivered tonight.

HUMBUG: I'm sorry to say we don't have it. We simply couldn't finish it.

ANNA: Well, it's not a trip wasted. I have a pick up from a Tiny Tom.

(Tom enters with a few boxes and sets them on Anna's hand cart. The top box is open.)

TOM: Here I am. This is the last of them.

BELLE: What is that, Tom?

(Tom pulls a wooden nativity set out of the open top box.)

TOM: It's just a few presents I'm shipping out to family. Manger scenes like this one here.

CAROLE: This is beautiful, Tom. You made this?

TOM: Yes, I whittle them while I watch the sheep. I give them as gifts to help tell the story of Christmas.

SAM: *(walking up to Tom and taking the manger out of the nativity set, looking at it with newfound understanding)* Emmanuel was born, the Light of the World. The angels told the shepherds and they came to worship Him. The wise men brought their gifts to the King. *(replacing the manger in the nativity)* Tom, what a great idea!

TOM: Thanks! It might be one of my better ideas.

SAM: Tonight ... Marlo, Fuzzy, Anna ... each visitor brought me a piece of the story. They wove a Christmas yarn to tell me the good news of Jesus' birth.

TOM: The good news is a gift itself!

ALL: *(ad lib: Yes, it's beautiful, great idea, etc.)*

BOB: To God's people who waited for hundreds of years for the promised Messiah, it must have seemed like God had forgotten His promises ... but the Bible says that at the right time, God sent His Son to set us free!

(music begins to "In the Fullness of Time")

SAM: We might not have met our big deadline, but I'd say this gift arrived just in time.

SONG: "In the Fullness of Time"

SCENE 7

(At the conclusion of the song, Sam is elated.)

SAM: **Oh, I feel light as a feather!**

BOB: **Sam, I didn't think you'd be in the mood to celebrate after missing the deadline.**

SAM: **Humbug!**

HUMBUG: **What?**

SAM: **No, I was just saying "humbug." Yes, I'm disappointed that we didn't get our big order out tonight, but the most important thing that happened today for me is what my three visitors showed me.**

BELLE: **What's that, Sam?**

SAM: **You know I love the ugly sweater business. It puts a smile on everybody's face at Christmas time!**

TOM: **Ugly *is* beautiful!**

SAM: **But the three visitors reminded me of what really matters ... Jesus, the Promised Messiah ... the Light of the World ... the Deliverer. Way more important than a gag gift is God's gift to us ... Emmanuel ... God with us!**

HUMBUG: *(swiping on her tablet)* **I made a note of it, Boss!**

CAROLE: **So are we still going to be in the ugly sweater business?**

SAM: **Of course we are, Carole! I think we might diversify a bit too. I think Tom has a great idea to spread the good news of great joy!**

ALL: *(ad lib: "That's a great idea," "awesome," etc.)*

SAM: **Employees of Unique Gifts from Luxurious Yarns ... let the Christmas celebration begin!**

TOM: **God bless us, every one!**

(Everybody cheers.)

(music begins to "A Christmas Yarn Curtain Calls")

SONG: "A Christmas Yarn Curtain Calls"