

CrossPoint's
A Christmas Carol

Adaptation by Dan Johnston
From the book by Charles Dickens

CAST:

Narrator
Ebenezer Scrooge
Bob Cratchit
Spirit of Christmas Past (SC Past)
Spirit of Christmas Present (SC Present)
Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come (SC Yet to Come)
Fred Hollowell, Ebenezer's nephew
Jacob Marley, Ebenezer's dead partner
Mrs. Cratchit
Belinda Cratchit
Martha Cratchit
Peter Cratchit
Two Younger Cratchits
Tiny Tim
Janet Hollowell, Fred's wife
Mr. Jeeves, Charity Solicitor
Mr. Howell, Charity Solicitor
School-age Ebenezer (about 8 eight years old)
Young adult Ebenezer
Fan, Ebenezer's little sister (10-12 years old)
Mr. Fezziwig, Ebenezer's jovial employer
Mrs. Fezziwig
Ignorance
Want
Belle, Ebenezer's young romance
Lady
Gentleman
Broker 1
Broker 2
Broker 3
Old Joe, the junk dealer
Mrs. Dilber, the laundress
Poulterer
Fiddler
Guest 1
Guest 2
Guest 3
Boy
Merchant 1
Merchant 2
Merchant 3
Merchant 4
Child 1
Child 2
Child 3

A CrossPoint Christmas Carol

ACT 1

- SCENE 1: THE COUNTING HOUSE
 - 1.1a: Market
 - 1.1b: Office
 - 1.1c: Street
- SCENE 2: THE BEDROOM
 - 1.2a: Bedroom Interior
- SCENE 3: THE BEDROOM
 - 1.3a: Bedroom Interior
 - 1.3b: Bedroom Wing
- SCENE 4: OUTDOORS
 - 1.4a: Schoolyard
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- SCENE 5: FEZZIWIG'S ESTABLISHMENT
 - 1.5a: Warehouse
- SCENE 6: OUTDOORS
 - 1.6a: Bench
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- SCENE 7: THE BEDROOM
 - 1.7a: Bedroom Interior
 - 1.7b: Bedroom Wing
- SCENE 8: CRATCHIT HOME
 - 1.8a: Marketplace
 - 1.8b: Living Room

ACT 2

- SCENE 1: HOLLOWELL HOME
 - 2.1a: Parlor
 - 2.1b: Darkness
- SCENE 2: THE DARKNESS
 - 2.2a: Darkness
 - 2.2b: Stock Exchange

- 2.2c: Junk Shop
- 2.2d: Rental
- SCENE 3: CRATCHIT HOME
 - 2.3a: Living Room
- SCENE 4: GRAVEYARD
 - 2.4a: Graveyard
- SCENE 5: THE BEDROOM
 - 2.5a: Bedroom Interior
 - 2.5b: Window
- SCENE 6: OUTDOORS
 - 2.6a: Street
- SCENE 7: HOLLOWELL HOME
 - 2.7a: Parlor
- SCENE 8: THE COUNTING HOUSE
 - 2.8a: Office

ACT 1

SCENE 1: THE COUNTING HOUSE

(Theme music behind. Merchants bustle about the streets, selling their goods and shouting. Children run through playing and laughing.)

MERCHANT 1

Merry Christmas everyone!

MERCHANT 2

Fresh chestnuts here! Ready for roasting!

CHILD 1

Please sir, we're hungry

CHILD 2

Just a scrap, sir!

CHILD 3

Please, sir! We're very hungry!

MERCHANT 3

Oh, Merry Christmas. (Throws some food)

Child 2

Oh, thank you, sir!

Child 1

Thank you!

Child 3

What a Christmas! (Children run off)

MERCHANT 3

(Hands food to customer) Here you are sir!

MERCHANT 1

Would you like to buy this wreath, madam?!

MERCHANT 4

Freshest catch around! Brought in this morning!

As the music darkens, SCROOGE is lit in the dining room with a sense of distaste on his face. Merchants and children flee uncomfortably. SCROOGE slowly walks towards the stage as it darkens. We hear the voice of the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR

Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatsoever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was considered good for any piece of business he chose to put his hand to. Marley was as dead as a doornail.

Now, I don't know what there is particularly dead about a doornail. I would think a coffin nail would be a deader piece of iron; but, far be it from me to change the expression, or the country's done for. So, permit me to repeat, once again, emphatically, that Marley was dead as a doornail. Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he had been partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole friend, and the only man who mourned him...if Scrooge can be said to have mourned at all. And the mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterward, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley.

It was bitterly cold and the fog was thick as pea soup on that Christmas Eve of 1843, when Scrooge sat busy in his counting house, with his clerk nearby.

(Spot dims. There SCROOGE is seated at a high desk, with CRATCHIT seated at a low desk, partially facing away. Stage lights full, NARRATOR exits.)

CRATCHIT

(standing): Seven years ago, today (walks toward the stove).

SCROOGE

What's that you say?

CRATCHIT

Mr. Marley died; seven years ago, this very day.

SCROOGE

Would it be too much to ask that you to return to the work for which I pay you so handsomely? (CRATCHIT reaches for a lump of coal) Mr. Cratchit!

CRATCHIT

The fire has gone cold Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Come over here Mr. Cratchit. What is this? (Points at his sleeve)

CRATCHIT
A shirt, sir.

SCROOGE
And this? (Points at his vest)

CRATCHIT
A waistcoat.

SCROOGE
And this? (Points at his coat)

CRATCHIT
A coat.

SCROOGE
These are garments, Mr. Cratchit. Garments were invented
mankind's protection against the cold. Once they have been
purchased, they may be used indefinitely for the purpose for
which they are intended. Coal burns, coal is momentary, and coal
is costly. There will be no more coal used in this office today.
Is that quite clear, Mr. Cratchit?

CRATCHIT
Yes, sir.

SCROOGE
Now please return to your work, before I am forced to conclude
that your services are no longer required.

CRATCHIT
Yes, sir (returns to his desk as FRED enters).

FRED
A Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE
(surprised) What?

FRED
I said, a Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE
God? Christmas?

FRED
Why, yes!

SCROOGE

Bah, humbug!

FRED

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

SCROOGE

Of course, I do! What's Christmas but a time for purchasing things for which you have no need and no money; a time for finding yourself a year older and not a penny richer? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should 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 it in mine.

FRED

Keep it?! But you don't keep it!

SCROOGE

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

FRED

Well, there are many things from which I have benefited, even if they didn't show a profit, I dare say. The day of our Savior's birth makes Christmas a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time. It's the only time of year I know of when men and women seem to all open their shut-up hearts freely. And therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of silver or gold in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and I say, God bless it!

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

SCROOGE

Another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your position! (CRATCHIT slinks back to his work) Quite a moving speech, it's a wonder you don't run for Parliament.

FRED

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

SCROOGE

I'll see myself in hell first.

FRED

But why so cold hearted, Uncle? It would mean a great deal to me and to my wife.

SCROOGE

Ah yes, your wife. I am told she brought very little to the marriage.

FRED

We married for love.

SCROOGE

(scoffs) Love? Good afternoon, nephew.

FRED

I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you. Why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

FRED:

I am sorry to find you so resolute. But I came all this way to give you greetings of the season so nevertheless I say, Merry Christmas, Uncle!

(FRED turns away)

SCROOGE

Goodbye.

(FRED spins around)

FRED

And a Happy New Year!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon!!

(FRED begins to leave)

FRED

(poking back in): And a Merry Christmas to you and your family, Bob Cratchit! You will give them my best?

CRATCHIT

(looking up, surprised) Yes, sir! Thank you for remembering them, and a Merry Christmas to you!

FRED

Goodbye, Bob.

(FRED exits)

SCROOGE

There's another one, my clerk, with fifteen bob a week and a wife and family no doubt! Talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

(JEEVES AND HOWELL, Charity solicitors, enter.)

MS. JEEVES

Mr. Scrooge I presume.

SCROOGE

Indeed you do, madam.

JEEVES

We are new here, so you don't know us, sir.

SCROOGE

Nor do I wish to.

MR. HOWELL

Yes, well, let me explain, sir. At this holy season of the year, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor who suffer greatly at the present time.

JEEVES

Many thousands are in want of basic needs; thousands more are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE

(looking up) Are there no prisons?

HOWELL

Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE

And the workhouses for the poor, still in operation?

HOWELL

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

SCROOGE

Oh, well, I was afraid from what you had said that something had stopped them in their useful course. I'm glad to hear it.

JEEVES

(exchanging glances with HOWELL) A few of us are trying to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink, and some means of warmth.

HOWELL

What shall we put you down for?

SCROOGE

Nothing.

JEEVES

Ah! You wish to remain anonymous then?

SCROOGE

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

HOWELL

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

SCROOGE

If they would rather die, perhaps they had better do so and decrease the surplus population.

HOWELL

Surely you don't mean that, sir!

SCROOGE

With all my heart. Now if you two would go about your business, I'll thank you to leave me to mine. Good day.

JEEVES

(Shocked) Yes. Good day.

(SOLICITORS exit, and SCROOGE looks at his pocket watch and puts on his gloves.)

SCROOGE

(to CRATCHIT) You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose? (CRATCHIT hands SCROOGE his hat and scarf)

CRATCHIT

If it's quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE

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

CRATCHIT

It's only once a year, sir.

SCROOGE

It's a poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December. But I suppose if you must have the whole day, you'll be here all the earlier the next morning?

CRATCHIT

Oh, yes, sir. I certainly shall.

(SCROOGE exits stage right. CRATCHIT dons scarf and hat, snuffs his candle, and heads to the front of the stage. He greets TINY TIM, hobbling with a crutch, face aglow.)

TINY TIM

Father!

CRATCHIT

Hello, my dear son!

(CRATCHIT hugs TINY TIM)

TINY TIM

I have been waiting for you!

CRATCHIT

I know, I'm sorry. Hey, let's go by Corn Hill, and watch the children play. Someday you will be there, too, Tim!

TINY TIM

All right! I feel that I'm getting stronger every day.

CRATCHIT

And do you remember what tomorrow is?

TINY TIM

Christmas Day!

CRATCHIT

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

TINY TIM

Hoorah for Christmas!

(CRATCHIT exits center stage. Fade to black.)

SCENE 2: THE BEDROOM

NARRATOR

(Over scene change to Scrooge's bedroom, music under. We hear the voice of the NARRATOR.) Oh Scrooge. He was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, he was. A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner, to be sure! Secret, self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. He carried his own low temperature with him everywhere he went; he iced his office in the dogdays and didn't throw it one degree at Christmas.

Every night, Scrooge took his melancholy dinner all alone, and this night was no different. He read all the papers and beguiled the rest of the evening with his bankers-book before he took himself home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner, Jacob. Marley.

They were a gloomy suite of rooms. It was old and dreary, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

(Lights up on the door and streetlights as SCROOGE walks across the stage to the stage right door. He approaches and looks for his keys. MARLEY'S face appears on the knocker, and suddenly it mangles and moans, startling SCROOGE so that he falls. The door knocker returns to normal. Slowly, SCROOGE opens the door while attempting to shake off the event. He reenters from center stage, with lights up on SCROOGE'S bedroom. He places his hat and coat on the rack and removes his shoes. He puts on his sleeping-gown, slippers and night-cap and fills his bowl with gruel from a pot in the fireplace. He sits in his chair in front of the fire with his bed nearby. Suddenly calling bells begin to ring, startling SCROOGE. It begins slowly at first, and then becomes faster and louder, more insistent. It stops just as suddenly, leaving Scrooge momentarily frozen. He goes back to his gruel, mumbling. We hear the sound of heavy chains being dragged across the floor. Scrooge looks up, spooked.)

MARLEY

(off stage, in a booming voice) Scrooge!

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

MARLEY

Scroooge!!

SCROOGE

(after a pause) Humbug.

(The sound of dragging chains is heard. The center door bursts in and falls to the floor as fog billows in. MARLEY enters slowly, a grayish-white figure bound in cash-boxes and thick ledgers on oversized chains secured with huge padlocks, all of the same color. He stops center stage.)

SCROOGE

(eyes wide, incredulous) What do you want with me?

MARLEY

(proceeding in a dark, low tone) Much!

SCROOGE

Who are you?

MARLEY

Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE

Alright, who were you then?

MARLEY

In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE

(long, fearful pause) Jacob? Can you sit down?

MARLEY

I can.

SCROOGE

Do it then.

MARLEY

(sitting) You do not believe in me.

SCROOGE
I don't.

MARLEY
Why do you doubt your senses?

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

MARLEY
(screaming monstrously) AAAHHH! NOOOOO!!!!

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

MARLEY
Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me or not?

SCROOGE
I do, I must! But why do you come to me?

MARLEY
I am condemned in death for what I did not do in life. I am doomed to walk the earth and witness what I cannot share - but might have shared and turned to happiness (moans in agony).

SCROOGE
You are fettered in chains! Tell me why!

MARLEY
I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, yard by yard. Do you recognize its pattern? Can you imagine the weight and lengths of the chains you bear? It was as long and heavy as this seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it since! Yours is a ponderous chain!
(Scrooge looks about him on the floor, seeing nothing.)

SCROOGE
I see no chain.

MARLEY
Mine were invisible until the day of my death. As yours shall be.

SCROOGE

Jacob, please speak comfort to me.

MARLEY

I have none to give. I cannot rest, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole. Now endless journeys lie before me.

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

Business?! Mankind was my business! (SCROOGE falls to his knees again.) The common welfare was my business! Charity, mercy and benevolence were all my business! Hear me! My time is nearly done!

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

I am here to warn you, that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate, a chance I have procured for you by the mercy of God, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

You always were a good friend.

MARLEY

Tonight, you will be visited by three Spirits.

SCROOGE

(nervously) Is... is that the chance you mentioned? In that case I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY

Expect the first when the bell tolls one.

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

Expect the second on the stroke of two. The third, more mercurial, shall appear in his own good time. Look to see me no more!

(Fog floods in the door and MARLEY disappears into it. We hear screams of remorse and suffering off stage. Scrooge runs to the window, backs away scared and confused and attempts to shake the whole thing off. It doesn't work. Fade to black.)

SCENE 3: THE BEDROOM.

(We hear the voice of the NARRATOR. As he speaks, we see Scrooge pace the floor, crawl into bed, then tossing and turning.)

NARRATOR

And so, Scrooge lay in his bed and thought, and thought, and thought it over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and the more he endeavored not to think, the more he thought.

Marley's spirit bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved within himself, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back again, like a strong spring released, to its first position and presented the same problem to be worked all through.

(Spot on the bed. SCROOGE sits up, looks around.)

SCROOGE

Was it a dream, then?

(We hear the CATHEDRAL CHIME.)

SCROOGE

One, and nothing!

(Pleased with himself, he lays back down. A light travels to SCROOGE and then behind his bed. With a flash, a figure emerges from behind SCROOGE'S bed. All lights up to full.)

SC PAST

Scrooge!

SCROOGE

(startled, sitting up) Ahh!

(His head swivels left, as of its own accord. He sees SC PAST, a striking female figure with bright flowing hair in a white robe bedecked tastefully with summer flowers, and a silver sash. Her expression is bright, full of life and hope. A bright light accompanies her. Her voice should be firm, yet light.)

SCROOGE

Are you the Spirit who's coming was foretold to me?

SC PAST

I am!

SCROOGE

Who, and what, are you?

SC PAST

I am the Spirit of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE

(looking her over): Long past?

SC PAST

No, your past.

SCROOGE

Perhaps you could turn down that light that accompanies you?

SC PAST

(indignant) What is Christmas, but the moment that light came into the world? This is the light of truth! Would you soon put out with your dark passions, the light that the Christ-child has given?

SCROOGE

I beg your pardon, I didn't mean to offend. (beat) What brings you here?

SC PAST

Your welfare, of course!

SCROOGE

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

SC PAST

Ha! You have a sense of humor!

SCROOGE

I am in earnest madam; that was not a joke.

SC PAST

Be careful Ebenezer Scrooge. I speak of your reclamation!

SCROOGE

(Standing) And what do I need reclaiming from?

SC PAST
Your own path of sin and degradation.

SCROOGE
Oh. That.

SC PAST
Yes. That. Now come with me! (walks behind the bed)

SCROOGE
Spirit, where are we going?

(With a flash, the light returns to the stage and hovers in front of the window.)

SC PAST
A place that you have already been to see the shadows of what has been. Come Ebenezer. (disappears out the window)

SCROOGE
No! Wait. But I am mortal and liable to fall!

SC PAST
In the Spirit, there are no such limitations. (SCROOGE begins to levitate) Don't fret, in the visions you see, the figures will not be aware of us. (fade to black)

SCENE 4: OUTDOORS

(Bells and children heard quietly in the background, then lights up. SCROOGE stands above, looking down on a schoolyard.)

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

SC PAST
Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE
(weeping a little) Nothing. There's something in my eye (pause, and sounds of a passing wagon). Why, those boys in the wagon! (Points offstage right) I know every one of them! They were schoolmates of mine. Hallo friends!

SC PAST
I told you, they cannot see you.

SCROOGE

How happy they all seem.

SC PAST

Yes, they do! It is Christmas! Come now, do you remember the way, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE

Remember it! I could walk it blindfolded!

(Both begin to walk towards the stairs)

SC PAST

Strange. For so many years you seemed to have forgotten it (They walk to stage left. Spot on small boy sitting on a stool. Stage lights to dim. He is reading a book. He looks sad.)

SC PAST

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

(SCROOGE approaches the boy.)

SCROOGE

That's me! (SC PAST nods) Poor boy. My mother died giving birth to my sister. My father grew morose and seemed to begrudge us both ever after. (the child stands and exits defeated) I was abandoned in this school on many Christmases while the other children visited their homes.

SC PAST

Let's see another Christmas.

(Stage lights dim and change color slightly to an aged blue. YOUNG EBENEZER steps onto the apron, pacing back and forth, agitated. FAN enters stage left throws her arms around him. SCROOGE and SCP watch the scene.)

FAN

Dear, dear brother!

EBENEZER

Fan! Little Fan! You've grown!

FAN

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

EBENEZER

Home, little Fan?

FAN

Yes! Father is so much kinder than he used to be. He was in a pleasant mood just the other night, so that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said yes! And he sent me to bring you.

SCROOGE

Are you sure father is ready to have me home?

FAN

Oh, yes! I am sure of it! Well, father has arranged an apprenticeship for you, but first we are to be together all the Christmas long!

EBENEZER

He has?! Where am I to be apprenticed?

FAN

You will work for a wonderful man, Mr. Fezziwig, who keeps a warehouse. Now come! We mustn't keep the carriage waiting!

(They exit quickly.)

SCROOGE

(lights narrow on SCROOGE and SC PAST) She was a frail creature, and often ill; but she had a large heart.

SC PAST

Your sister died a young woman, but she had children as I recall?

SCROOGE

(thoughtful) Yes, one son. His name is Fred. Fred Hollowell.

SC PAST

He bears a strong resemblance to your sister. Your nephew, Ebenezer; the only family you have left.

SCROOGE

Yes, that is true.

SC PAST

Come along, Ebenezer. It is time to see another Christmas. (Fade to black)

SCENE 5: FEZZIWIG'S ESTABLISHMENT

(Lights up to show SCROOGE and SC PAST standing stage right. FEZZIWIG is upstairs working at a desk with his back to the audience. Center stage is a table laden with goods. YOUNG EBENEZER is busy there)

SC PAST
Do you know this place?

SCROOGE
Know it! I was apprenticed here! (SCROOGE looks up and sees FEZZIWIG) Look! It's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart! Fezziwig, alive again!

FEZZIWIG
(turning with papers in hand, he checks his pocket watch, throws the papers high into the air and begins shouting) Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! No more work tonight, my boy! (male dancers enter) It's Christmas Eve! Clear all this nonsense away, all of you, we must make room! Life is too short for all work and no play. I say it's time for the party!

(All go to it. Table is cleared and moved off, desk is moved back. Lady revelers appear with a fiddler and MRS. FEZZIWIG. They all greet one another.)

FEZZIWIG
Kind fiddler, if you please, I should like to begin with "Sir Roger de Coverly"!
(Everyone claps excitedly and moves to the apron. Fiddler strikes and they begin to clap as MR. FEZZIWIG and MRS. FEZZIWIG dance. SCROOGE stands by, enjoying all of this. We should see that he is clearly smitten when he sees BELLE and the music fades to elegant. YOUNG EBENEZER and BELLE come together and dance while the other dancers laugh and move off stage. After dancing, the light fades to black.)

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

SCROOGE
A small thing?!

SC PAST
Is it not? After all, what did he do, this Fezziwig? Spent a few pounds on a party?

SCROOGE

It isn't that, Spirit. The happiness he gave was as good as if it cost a thousand pounds! Just, well. Many small things seem to, uh, well. Never mind.

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

NARRATOR

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to anyone whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself. He was a little older now, a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years, but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

SCENE 6: OUTDOORS

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

BELLE

Another idol has displaced me, but if it can make you as happy as I would have tried to do, I should be satisfied.

EBENEZER

What idol has displaced you?

BELLE

A golden one.

EBENEZER

Now, there's a double-standard for you! The entire world speaks against poverty, yet it condemns the pursuit of wealth just as harshly!

BELLE

You fear the world too much, Ebenezer. I have seen your nobler virtues fall away, one by one, until nothing is left but one master-passion: the pursuit of profit. You have changed.

EBENEZER

Changed? Perhaps grown wiser and more astute, but I haven't changed my feelings toward you.

BELLE

Oh, Ebenezer, our promise to one another is an old one. We made it when we were young and poor, and happy to remain so. You used to believe that God would improve our fortune if we lived with patience and with hard work. But you are not that same man.

EBENEZER

(slamming his fist and standing) I was a boy! Trusting God against this world? No, it takes something of substance!

BELLE

Is that all? Tell me, Ebenezer: If you had never made this promise to me, would you try to win me now? A poor, dowerless girl with nothing to bring to a marriage?

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

BELLE

(standing) Ah, no. Just as I thought.

EBENEZER

You think I would not?

BELLE

What a safe and terrible answer! Ebenezer, I release you. I let you go with a full heart. (Standing to walk away) May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

(Exits. Lights focus on SCROOGE and SC PAST)

SCROOGE

Spirit! Show me no more! Conduct me home! Why do you enjoy torturing me?

SC PAST

There is one more shadow we must see.

SCROOGE

I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!

(SCP takes hold of SCROOGE. A couple appear opposite.)

GENTLEMAN

I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.

LADY

Oh? Who was it?

GENTLEMAN

It was old Ebenezer Scrooge. I passed his office window. His partner, Jacob Marley, lies upon the point of death, I hear. And there he sat, old Scrooge. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.

LADY

He was once a very kind and gentle man. He was betrothed to my sister at one time you know.

GENTLEMAN

Yes, I do seem to recall. I hear her husband and children are well.

LADY

Yes, they are. I saw them in church just last week. To think she once was intended to Ebenezer.

GENTLEMAN

And now he has nothing but money, and no favorable cause for which to spend it.

LADY

(shaking his head) Poor miserable man. I pity him so. (the couple stroll offstage)

SCROOGE

Spare me your pity! I am in no need of it!

SC PAST

I told you, these are shadows of the things that have been. They cannot hear you.

SCROOGE

As for you (points at SCP) I have had enough of your pictures of the past! Leave me and haunt me no longer! Strike these memories dead in the past where they belong!

SC PAST

You may forget, but truth lives, Ebenezer!
(Thunder peels and lights cut.)

SCENE 7: THE BEDROOM

(We hear the narrator's voice)

NARRATOR

After this mighty struggle, if that can be called a struggle, Scrooge was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness, and, further, of being in his own bedroom once again. He barely had time to reel to bed before he sank into a heavy sleep.

(We hear the Cathedral chime twice. SCROOGE wakes and sits up in bed to dim spot. He looks around, expecting another ghost. He peeks under the bed, looks relieved and lays down. Just as his head touches the pillow, he hears...)

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT (SC PRESENT): (Belly laughing)
Scrooge! Ebenezer Scrooge!

(As SCROOGE alights from bed, lights up to reveal SCP at stage left, seated on a throne on a platform bedecked with mistletoe and heaped with a feast fit for a king. He is an impressive figure in full beard, wearing a green robe trimmed in white fur and crowned with a holly wreath. He holds a golden torch in his hand which is filled with star dust. He has a sheath with no sword. SCROOGE approaches gingerly.)

SC PRESENT

Come! Come here and know me better, man! I am the Spirit of Christmas Present. You have never seen the likes of me before, eh?

SCROOGE

No, never.

SC PRESENT

You've never walked forth with my elder brothers?

SCROOGE

No, I don't think I have. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

SC PRESENT

Hmmm... Yes. More than eighteen hundred, I think! What year is it?

SCROOGE

Eighteen hundred and forty-three.

SC PRESENT

Haha! Then I have scores of brothers! Eighteen hundred forty-two to be exact.

SCROOGE

A tremendous family to provide for.

SC PRESENT

Ever so concerned with provision! Haha!

SCROOGE

Yes. I see you wear a scabbard with no sword.

SC PRESENT

Indeed! Peace on earth! Good will toward men!

SCROOGE

Spirit, conduct me where you will.

SC PRESENT

(standing) Oh ho! Hahaha! Take hold of my robe, Ebenezer Scrooge!

(SCROOGE reaches out nervously and touches the robe. Stage lights cut to black and the main floor lights up)

SCENE 8: CRATCHIT HOME

(Merchants with carts and pedestrians enter main floor and the stage. Some assemble Cratchit's house at stage left. There is a great bustle of chattering and haggling. SCROOGE and SCP make their way among the crowd)

MERCHANT 1

I never agreed to that price! What do you take me for, a fool?!

MERCHANT 2

I wouldn't be wrong would I?

MERCHANT 1

Why I'll make sure to... (SC PRESENT sprinkles dust on the two)
... well, I suppose that ain't such a bad price after all.

MERCHANT 2

Oh, you were right. My apologies. It is Christmas after all, eh?

MERCHANT 1

Yes it is. Alright! Here you go! And merry Christmas!

MERCHANT 2

Merry Christmas!

SCROOGE

Spirit, is there a peculiar power that emanates from your torch?

SC PRESENT

There is a power.

SCROOGE

Something of fairies? A sprinkling of pixie dust?

SC PRESENT

It is Holy Spirit, not something that comes from my torch, but from the hearts and men and women who have come to know Christ.

SCROOGE

(showing doubt) I see.

(Crowd exits, leaving SCROOGE and SCP alone on stage. Scrim down for scene change to Cratchit's.)

SCROOGE

Spirit, many of these poor people have no means to warm their food. Why do you not do more to remove them from their suffering?

SC PRESENT

I?

SCROOGE

You and your brothers seem to have this power.

SC PRESENT

Hear me Scrooge! There are some upon this earth of yours who claim to know who is at fault, and yet do nothing themselves. Rather than serving the poor and destitute in the streets and workhouses, they serve themselves in places like their own counting houses. Charge the misuse of power to them, not us.

SCROOGE

(ashamed) Aye, I will.

SC PRESENT

(walking to the edge of the Cratchit house) Look here, do you know this house?

SCROOGE

I can't say that I do. I take it that it is of some significance.

SC PRESENT

It is the house of your loyal clerk, Bob Cratchit.

SCROOGE

Is it?! He does very well on fifteen bob a week.

SC PRESENT

Very well you say? Would you like to go inside?

SCROOGE

I wouldn't want to disturb him.

SC PRESENT

(firmly) As with the Spirit of Christmas Past, we shall be invisible and unheard. (ushering SCROOGE, they walk through the door and the lights up on the Cratchit family table.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

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

(Just then, MARTHA enters with SCROOGE and TINY TIM behind.)

MARTHA

Here I am, Mother! (To the cheers and greetings of the younger children.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh, Martha! How late you are!

MARTHA

We had a great deal of work to finish last night, and a great deal to clear away this morning!

MRS. CRATCHIT

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

BELINDA

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

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

CRATCHIT

But where's Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT

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

CRATCHIT

What? Not coming for Christmas!

MARTHA

(popping out) Oh, here I am, Father!

CRATCHIT

Martha!

(She embraces him. All cheer.)

TWO YOUNGER CRATCHITS

Come, Tim! Come hear the pudding singing in the copper!

(They bear him off.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

And did little Tim behave himself in church?

CRATCHIT

He did. As good as gold. Somehow he gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things. He told me that he hoped the people saw him in the church because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant for them to remember on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see... But he's growing stronger every day, I just know it. (Awkward pause)

MRS. CRATCHIT

Martha, help me with the goose. (Children cheering.)

PETER

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

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

THE CHILDREN

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

CRATCHIT

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

ALL
God bless us!

TINY TIM
God bless us, everyone!
(Lights dim on the table as dinner is served, under the following.)

SCROOGE
I had no idea Cratchit had a crippled son. Tell me, Spirit, is it serious? Will the boy live?

SC PRESENT
I see a vacant seat at this table, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved.

SCROOGE
(startled) No, say he will be spared.

SC PRESENT
If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, none other of my race will find him here. But if he is to die, then let him die, and decrease the surplus population!

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

SC PRESENT
Yes! So that in the future perhaps you will hold your tongue until you have discovered what the surplus population is, and where it is! It may be that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child!

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

MRS. CRATCHIT
Hmph! The founder of our feast, indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and hope he'd have a good appetite for it. (SCROOGE turns to sneak away and SC PRESENT pulls him back in)

CRATCHIT
My dear, the children. Christmas Day.

MRS. CRATCHIT

It should be Christmas Day, when one would drink the health of such an odious, stingy, unfeeling man as Ebenezer Scrooge.

CRATCHIT

My dear. Have a little charity.

MRS. CRATCHIT

(scoffing) Charity. Oh, alright, then. I'll drink his health, for your sake and the Day's sake, but not for his. (raising her cup) Long life to him! A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

CRATCHIT

To Mr. Scrooge.

MARTHA

To Mr. Scrooge.

ALL

To Mr. Scrooge. (All raise a glass and freeze in place. Fade to black.)

INTERMISSION

(Serving coffee and dessert.)

ACT 2

SCENE 1: HOLLOWELL HOME

(Light up to a small crowd at a party on Christmas Day. They are all holding drinks and playing a game. SCROOGE and SCP behold the scene from above.)

GUEST 1

So, you're thinking of an animal?

FRED

Yes.

JANET

A live animal?

FRED

Yes.

GUEST 2

A rather disagreeable animal?

FRED
Yes.

GUEST 3
A savage animal?

FRED
Yes.

JANET
Is it an animal who grunts and growls?

FRED
Yes.

GUEST 1
Would it be found here in London?

FRED
Yes.

GUEST 2
Is it a horse?

FRED
No.

GUEST 3
A cow?

FRED
No.

GUEST 1
A pig!

FRED
No.

GUEST 2
Is it a vulture?

FRED
Yes and no.

JANET
Oh! I know who it is Fred! It's your Uncle Scrooge!

FRED:

Yes! (All laugh)

FRED

Yesterday he actually said that Christmas was a humbug! He believed it, too! (laughter) He's really a comical old fellow, and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offenses carry their own punishment.

JANET

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

FRED

But his wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't even make himself comfortable with it. (General laughter)

JANET

Well, I have no pity for him.

FRED

Oh, but I have! Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He loses some pleasant moments with friends, and a dinner.

GUEST 2

Indeed, he loses a very good dinner!

GUEST 3

Here, here!

JANET

Why, thank you!

FRED

And still I intend to give him the same chance every year. My mother, God rest her saintly soul, loved him dearly. It is for this reason, and because he has sadly given us plenty of merriment, that I feel it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. He wouldn't take it from me, but Merry Christmas to the old man. To Uncle Scrooge!

ALL

Uncle Scrooge! (Laughter, as all drink.)

(Lights fade. Spot remains on SCROOGE and SC PRESENT and the GUESTS stroll off stage)

SCROOGE
It's true, you know.

SC PRESENT
What's that?

SCROOGE
Fan, she loved me and I her. Dear Fan, if only she were alive today.

SC PRESENT
She is gone, but Fred looks very like her.

SCROOGE
Yes, I've been reminded of that just recently. (Double-take at SC PRESENT) You seem to have aged. Are spirits lives so short?

SC PRESENT
My life upon this globe is very brief. It ends tonight.

SCROOGE
Tonight?

SC PRESENT
Tonight, at midnight. My time is drawing near.
(We see something at SCP's feet. SCROOGE notices it.)

SCROOGE
Forgive me, Spirit, but I see something strange and not belonging to yourself protruding there; from your skirts. Is it that foot or a claw?

SC PRESENT
It might be a claw, for the scant amount of flesh there is on it. Look here!
(SCP draws aside the folds of his robe to disclose WANT and IGNORANCE—two thin, dirty, wretched, scowling waifs crouched and clutching at his feet. SCROOGE turns away).

SC PRESENT
Look!

SCROOGE
No!

SC PRESENT

Look!

SCROOGE

Please!

SC PRESENT

Look here!

SCROOGE

(looking and alarmed) Are they yours?

SC PRESENT

No! They are man's! Do you not know them? This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, for upon their brow is written the word "doom". They spell the downfall of you, and all who deny their existence.

SCROOGE

Have they no refuge or resource? (the children run to SCROOGE and drag him to the back of the stage)

SC PRESENT

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

(Suddenly the lights go black and the chime of twelve is heard. SC PRESENT'S laughter echoes and fades.)

SCENE 2: THE DARKNESS

(Fog fills the stage and we hear a loud, stormy noise with wind and thunder. Spot comes up on Scrooge at stage right, standing, dazed. SCP has disappeared)

SCROOGE

Spirit?! Come back! I wish to talk! I have made a mistake here and there. Perhaps spoken a few words without much thought. Perhaps we can come to a meeting of the minds, I am a reasonable man. Spirit! Have pity on me. What have I done to be abandoned like this?

(The Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come (SC FUTURE) appears in fog on the upper stage. It is a tall figure, entirely cloaked and hooded in black. All that we will see of this figure are its bony hands)

SCROOGE

I take it that I am in the presence of the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come?

(SCY slowly nods.)

SCROOGE

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

(SC FUTURE nods.)

SCROOGE

I fear you more than any specter I have seen. Will you not speak to me?

(SC FUTURE lifts his arm and points beyond SCROOGE.)

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

(SC FUTURE points to center stage, SCROOGE follows. A small band of brokers appears.)

SCROOGE

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

(SC FUTURE points to the group of men.)

BROKER 1

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

BROKER 2

When did he die?

BROKER 1

Last night, I believe.

BROKER 3

What has he done with his money?

BROKER 1

I haven't heard. Left it with his company, perhaps. I only know he hasn't left it to me (all laugh).

BROKER 2

Well, it's likely to be a small funeral. I don't know anybody who would go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?

BROKER 3

I don't mind going if a lunch is provided. But I must be fed, for all the trouble its worth (laughter).

(BROKER'S exit. SCROOGE looks up at SC FUTURE, perplexed.)

SCROOGE

Have these men no sense of decency or decorum? Spirit, why am I privy to their conversation? What does it have to do with me?

(SC FUTURE turns and points stage left, revealing a greasy, bedraggled old man sitting on a chair and surrounded by an odd collection of junk in and out of boxes—old iron, rags, old clothes, moldy books, bottles, etc. An old crone arrives, carrying bundles, as SCROOGE observes.)

OLD JOE

Well, sit down and open it up! I cannot pay you for goods I haven't seen.

MRS. DILBER

Alright. Here we go.

OLD JOE

What do you call these Mrs. Dilber?

SCROOGE

Mrs. Dilber?!

MRS. DILBER

Bed curtains (laughs).

OLD JOE

You don't mean to tell me that you took 'em down while he was lying there? Rings and all!

MRS. DILBER

(laughing) Oh, I do! And why not?

OLD JOE

You was born to make your fortune, and you certainly will do it!

MRS. DILBER

Well, I shant hold back my hand when I can make something by it! (OLD JOE pulls out some blankets) I see you've got your mitts on his blankets now.

OLD JOE

His blankets?! (He drops the blankets in fear and wipes his hands)

MRS. DILBER

Well whose else did you think? He won't be feeling the cold without them now, Old Joe.

OLD JOE

Well, I hope he didn't die of anything catching!

MRS. DILBER

Don't you be afeared of that! I wasn't so fond of his company that I lingered about. (OLD JOE takes out a shirt) You look through that shirt until your eyes ache, and you won't find one hole in it!

SCROOGE

Those are my things! I'll have him before a magistrate. And you're fired Mrs. Dilber! Fired!

OLD JOE

How'd you claim this one?

MRS. DILBER

Someone was fool enough to put it on him, to be buried in it. But I took it off him! If he really wanted to keep them after he was dead, wicked old screw, why wasn't he more natural in his lifetime?

OLD JOE

That's right.

MRS. DILBER

If he had been, he would have had someone to look after him when he was struck with death. Instead of lying there, gasping out his last. Alone. By himself.

OLD JOE

Well it's quite a collection you brought.

MRS. DILBER

Well, what's your offer then?

OLD JOE

(Rechecking the goods) One pound, five and three, and not a penny more if I was to be boiled for it!

MRS. DILBER

You're hardened Joe, no mistake about it.

OLD JOE

I'm always kind to the ladies! That's how I've ruined meself (laughter).

SCROOGE

Spirit, I see that my life may look similar to this unhappy man who dies in solitary loathing. But there must be someone! If there is any person who feels emotion caused by this man's death, show that person to me I beg you!

(SC FUTURE turns and points to stage right. The husband is sober but not without hope.)

CAROLINE

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

THOMAS

No. There is hope yet, Caroline.

CAROLINE

(disappointed) Only if he repents, that old miser. Nothing is past hope if that miracle has happened.

THOMAS

(serious) He is past repenting, dear. He is dead.

CAROLINE

(serious) Dead? (suddenly breaks with a laugh) Oh, God be praised! To whom will our debt be transferred?

THOMAS

I don't know. But before that time we will be ready with the money. And even if we weren't, it would be unlikely that any new creditor would be so merciless as he! We may sleep tonight with light hearts, Caroline! (spot out)

SCROOGE

Spirit! I ask to see some emotion connected with death, and you show me only pleasure. I demand to be shown some tenderness and depth of feeling connected with death!

SCENE 3: CRATCHIT HOME

(Sound of wind and thunder. Lights come up on stage left and SCROOGE turns to see the Cratchit family. The children are seated quietly. MRS. CRATCHIT and the older girls are sewing. PETER is reading from the Bible.)

PETER (from Matthew 19:14): "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

MRS. CRATCHIT

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

PETER

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

MRS. CRATCHIT

Yes, I've known him to walk with... (recovering) I have known him to walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

PETER

And so have I.

MRS. CRATCHIT

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

(She stands to greet CRATCHIT as he enters. They all greet him as he sits.)

CRATCHIT

I went by there today, its why I'm late. I wish you could have been there. It would have done you good to see how green it still is. We shall all go on Sunday. I promised him that I would walk there every Sunday; to visit him, you see... (starts to break down and puts his head in his hands)

PETER

Father, please don't grieve so.

(Cratchit recovers; hugs from the children)

CRATCHIT

I'm sorry, I have all of you! Blessings to be thankful for. (cherrily) Do you know who I saw today? Fred Hollowell, Mr. Scrooge's nephew. He greeted me in his usual, cheerful way and he saw that I was a little sad. (fading back to sadness) I told him why and he said to me: 'I am heartily sorry, Mr. Cratchit, heartily sorry.'

MRS. CRATCHIT

Robert, Timmy's a part of all of us. For his sake we must go on living. So long as we love one another, he will always be alive.

CRATCHIT

Yes, my dear. And however and whenever we are parted from one another, I'm sure none of us will ever forget poor Tiny Tim.

(Hugs all around. Lights come down on the scene, leaving SCROOGE and SC FUTURE in spot.)

SCENE 4: GRAVEYARD

(Fog rolls in heavily and a concealed tombstone rolls center stage as other headstones appear. Thunder and wind are heard as SCROOGE SPEAKS)

SCROOGE

I ask for tenderness and depth of feeling, and you show me that. There is nothing more I need see. Take me home.

(SC FUTURE points to the tombstone as lightning strikes and eerie red lights reveal a graveyard scene. SCROOGE is suddenly hesitant.)

SCROOGE

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

(SC FUTURE only continues to point to the gravestone.)

SCROOGE

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

(Lightning strikes as the cover falls from the tombstone, revealing the inscription of SCROOGE'S own name. He falls to his knees. SC FUTURE turns to SCROOGE and lowers his arm.)

SCROOGE

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

(SC FUTURE remains still and silent.)

SCROOGE

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

(SC FUTURE remains still and SCROOGE stands to beg. A bright red glow comes from behind the gravestone.)

SCROOGE

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

(SC FUTURE grabs SCROOGE by the neck and raises him up. He tosses Scrooge down behind the stone and disappears from sight. SCROOGE screams and falls, hitting behind the stone, bouncing, and falls to the stage.)

SCENE 5: THE BEDROOM

(The tombstone spins around revealing SCROOGE'S bed. Lights come up to reveal SCROOGE'S bedroom. He lifts his head when he hears the chimes tolling EIGHT.)

SCROOGE: Wait...what day is this? It's morning, but what day? How long have I been with the Spirits? I don't know. (pinching himself) But I'm alive. I'm alive! (jumping around like a boy) I don't know what to do! I feel light as a feather. I'm happy as an angel! I'm as merry as a school-boy!

(He runs to the upper level to his window, looking out where a boy walks across the stage.)

SCROOGE

Hallo! You, boy! What day is it?

BOY

(looking up to SCROOGE) What day is it?

SCROOGE

Yes! What day is it today?

BOY

Why, it's Christmas Day!

SCROOGE

Christmas Day! Then the Spirits have done it all in one night. Why, of course, they can do anything they like! Of course they can. Haha! Hallo, my fine fellow!

BOY

Hallo!

SCROOGE

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

BOY

I should hope I did.

SCROOGE

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

BOY

The one as big as me?

SCROOGE

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

BOY

It's hanging there now.

SCROOGE

Then you must go and buy it. Yes, go and buy it now.

BOY

(looking around) Police!

SCROOGE

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

BOY

All right! (boy runs off).

SCROOGE

Haha! (Beginning to dress) I'll send it to Bob Cratchit! He won't know who sent it. I won't tell him! Haha! It's twice the size of Tiny Tim! Oh...Tiny Tim! On my soul, Tiny Tim will live! They did it all in one night! (On his knees) Oh, heaven be praised for this! I say it on my knees, dear Lord, on my knees! (Jumping up) A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world! Haha!

SCENE 6: OUTDOORS

(SCROOGE runs down stairs and meets BOY as he returns with the POULTERER.)

BOY

(pointing to SCROOGE) There he is! That's him!

SCROOGE

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

POULTERER

Merry Christmas, sir.

SCROOGE

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

POULTERER

Thank you, sir.

SCROOGE

And here is the money for the delivery!

POULTERER

Thank you, sir.

SCROOGE

And here is a tip for you, sir!

POULTERER

(smiling by now) Thank you, sir!

SCROOGE

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

BOY

Thank you, sir!

(BOY and POULTERER walk off)

SCROOGE

And a very Merry Christmas!

POULTERER and BOY

Merry Christmas!

(They exit center stage as MR. JEEVES and MR. HOWELL enter stage right, quietly chatting. SCROOGE turns, sees them, hurries to them.)

SCROOGE

(to JEEVES and HOWELL) Good morning gentlemen! Merry Christmas to you.

JEEVES

(with attitude) Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Yes, that is my name. I fear it isn't pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your forgiveness and please accept my pledge to the poor in the amount of... (SCROOGE whispers in HOWELL'S ear)

HOWELL

Lord, bless me! (Whispers in JEEVES ear)

JEEVES

My dear Mr. Scrooge! Are you quite serious?!

SCROOGE

If you please, and not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you.

HOWELL

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

SCROOGE

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

JEEVES & HOWELL

We will! We will indeed!

SCROOGE

I am much obliged to you. I thank you, fifty times. God bless you both, and a Merry Christmas! (SCROOGE exits)

HOWELL

(speech begins enthusiastically but fades to thoughtful confusion) Merry Christmas Mr. Scrooge...

(JEEVES and HOWELL stare. Lights out.)

SCENE 7: HOLLOWELL HOME

(We hear the voice of the narrator)

NARRATOR

Would you believe it if I told you, that Scrooge went to church that day? He did. And walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head as they passed, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He even prayed as we went. He had never dreamed that any walk - that anything at all - could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon, he turned his steps toward his nephew Fred's house.

(Lights up on HOLLOWELL home at stage left where Fred is putting a necklace on Janet.)

JANET

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

FRED

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

JANET

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

FRED

I know, my dear! I know (they embrace).
(There is a knock.)

JANET

Now who can that be?

FRED

I don't know. No one's expected at this hour.
(FRED walks to the stage door as SCROOGE enters. He walks backward, with SCROOGE.)

SCROOGE
Hello, Fred.

FRED
Uncle Ebenezer?!

SCROOGE
Yes. Merry Christmas, Fred.

FRED
(still stunned) Uncle Ebenezer, this is my wife Janet. Janet,
this is my Uncle Ebenezer.

JANET
It's a pleasure.

SCROOGE
More like a surprise, wouldn't you say?

JANET
(conceding) Well, that too.

FRED
(a little frustrated) Yes, it is a surprise. When we spoke
yesterday you made it quite clear that you had no intention of
accepting my annual invitation.

SCROOGE
And I also made clear some other things. That Christmas is a
humbug, a waste of time and money, a false and superstitious
festival of commerce, devoutly to be ignored?

FRED
Yes, basically that was it.

SCROOGE
Well then, I have come for three reasons. First, to beg your
pardon for the things I said about Christmas. *That* was a humbug,
Fred.

FRED
Was it?

SCROOGE
It certainly was. I didn't know it then, but I know it now. And
secondly, I have come to meet your wife.

FRED

And here she is.

SCROOGE

Yes, and she is very beautiful.

JANET

Thank you.

SCROOGE

(to Janet) Would you believe that I was in love once?

JANET

(smiling) Yes.

SCROOGE

But I possessed neither the courage nor the optimism, and perhaps the depth of feeling that you two share. And finally, I would like to accept the invitation to dine with you this evening, if you will have me.

FRED: Of course, we will have you!

JANET

Yes, we would be very happy to have you here!

SCROOGE

Thank you both. And you know Fred, I've never mentioned it, but I see the image of my sister in your face. I loved her, you know.

FRED

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

SCROOGE

And so we shall be, Fred. So we shall be.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 8: THE COUNTING HOUSE

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

SCROOGE

A full seven minutes late! (CRATCHIT bursts in the door and SCROOGE looks up with a feigned scowl and growl) Mr. Cratchit!

CRATCHIT

(hurrying to his desk) Morning, sir.

SCROOGE

Mr. Cratchit, you are late.

CRATCHIT

(freezing for a moment) Yes, sir.

SCROOGE

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

CRATCHIT

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

SCROOGE

(alighting from his desk) Step this way, sir, if you please.
(They meet at CRATCHIT'S desk.)

CRATCHIT

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

SCROOGE

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

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

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

(Cast begins to pour in as we hear the voice of the NARRATOR.)

NARRATOR

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more.

(SCROOGE puts his arm around TINY TIM in hand, who is walking without his crutch.)

NARRATOR

He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew. And to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father.

(SCROOGE and CRATCHIT'S center stage, surrounded by CAST.)

NARRATOR

And ever afterward it was always said of Ebenezer Scrooge that he knew how to keep Christmas, and keep it well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed...

CAST

GOD BLESS US, EVERYONE!

(theme music plays as the cast waves, bows, and exits the stage.)

THE END