

A Christmas Carol – Faith Works 2024 – V3.2 12/2/2024

**FaithWORKS**  
PRESENTS

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

DECEMBER  
5<sup>TH</sup>-15<sup>TH</sup>

**THE RUSSELL THEATRE**  
at New Directions 516 South 17th Street

**FaithWORKS**  
Performing Arts

Box Office: (502) 414-4225  
**FAITHWORKS-STUDIOS.COM**

## **PRESHOW**

### **PROLOGUE**

**Cratchit:** Good evening. Tonight we will present what has become one of Charles Dickens most popular stories. It was first published in in 1844. A Christmas Carol- Stave One: "Marley's Ghost." *(He begins his dramatic and well-rehearsed reading.)*

Marley was dead. This must be clearly understood, or nothing remarkable can come of the story. The record of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner even Scrooge signed it.

And Scrooge's signature was good for anything he chose to put it on. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.

Scrooge and Marley had been business partners for many years. Scrooge was Marley's only executor, sole administrator, sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge, though not deeply affected by the sad event, was still an excellent businessman.

Scrooge never had Marley's name removed from the sign. It remained there, years later, above the door. Sometimes, newcomers to the business would call Scrooge - Scrooge or Marley-but he answered to both. It made no difference to him.

On that particular day, one of the coldest, bleakest Christmas Eves, the weather was biting and raw. The fog pressed down thickly on the streets, and it was so late that candles began to appear in the windows of offices, looking like ruddy smears against the dark, oppressive air.

**Act 1, Scene 1**

*(LIGHTS FADE UP. SCROOGE and CRATCHIT come to life. SCROOGE counts money. CRATCHIT walks to the fireplace, blowing into his hands and rubbing his arms. HE is shivering.)*

SCROOGE: Cratchit! Get away from that fireplace.

CRATCHIT: *(HIS teeth chatter from the cold.)* I was just going to throw a little more coal on the fire.

SCROOGE: *(Annoyed. HE points to his head.)* Cratchit, do you know what this is?

CRATCHIT: *(Puzzled.)* Your head?

SCROOGE: And what is inside your head?

CRATCHIT: My brain?

SCROOGE: And what does your brain do?

CRATCHIT: *(Shrugs, pauses.)* It thinks?

SCROOGE: Very good. It thinks, Mr. Cratchit. Now, you think! If you are cold, what can you do to keep warm? Something that does not cost extra money.

CRATCHIT: *(Looks around and shrugs.)* Put more clothes on?

SCROOGE: Precisely.

CRATCHIT: I put on my jacket, but I was still cold. Then, I put on my coat. When that wasn't enough, I put on my scarf. There's nothing left.

SCROOGE: *(sighs)* Where are your mittens? Put them on. Surely, they should keep you sufficiently warm until it is time to leave. Think Cratchit. Think! Use your brain!

CRATCHIT: *(Puts on mittens and struggles with earmuffs. They keep collapsing when he tries to put them on. HE speaks in a whisper to himself.)* My brain is too cold to think.

SCROOGE: What was that?

CRATCHIT: *(timidly)* Nothing sir. I was just saying my brain is... on hold... I think.

SCROOGE: Well, take it off “hold” and get back to work. And no more sneaking coal in the fire unless you want to lose your job. When you burn coal it is the same as burning my money and you do not want to do that now, do you Mr. Cratchit?

CRATCHIT: No sir.

SCROOGE: Good. Then get back to work. You are wasting both my time and my money.

***(NEPHEW ENTERS)***

FRED: *(FRED addresses CRATCHIT.)* Merry Christmas.

CRATCHIT: Merry Christmas to you too, sir.

FRED: *(cheerfully)* Uncle! God save you! Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE: *(Does not look up from his work.)* Humbug!

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

SCROOGE: Of course I mean it. Anyway, what reason do you have to be merry? You are poor enough.

FRED: Come then. What reason do you have to be gloomy? You are rich enough.

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug! What's Christmas time to you but a time to find yourself a year older and not an hour richer? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled 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: But you do not keep it.

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

FRED: There are many things from which one can derive good but not profit, Uncle. I find Christmas a good time— a kind, forgiving, charitable time, a time when men and women forget differences, consider those things which make us all one. And therefore, though it's never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that Christmas has done us all great good, and I say, God bless it!

CRATCHIT: (*Moved by FRED'S speech. CLAPS*) Hear, hear!

SCROOGE: (*To CRATCHIT.*) Let me hear one more sound out of you, Bob Cratchit, and you'll keep Christmas by losing your employment!

FRED: Come, Uncle, don't be angry. Come and dine with Sara and me tomorrow.

SCROOGE: You ask the same thing every year, and the answer is still the same, NEVER!

FRED: But why, Uncle, why?

SCROOGE: Why did you get married against my wishes?

FRED: Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE: (*Mocking.*) Because you fell in love. Bah! A woman without a proper family, without a penny to her name? You fell in love. Good afternoon to you.

FRED: You know Uncle, I will never tire of asking you. That's because my mother loved you.

SCROOGE: And I her. Ah! Fan. My precious little sister. She died so young. So loving. So caring.

FRED: The love she felt for you is still strong, even after her death. That love now lives in me. There will come a day when you celebrate Christmas with my family.

SCROOGE: Nephew. Look at me closely... NEVER!

FRED: It saddens me that you are so firm about that. But, I'll continue to remain cheerful and optimistic! Merry Christmas, Uncle. God save you.

SCROOGE: Good afternoon, Nephew.

NEPHEW: And a happy New Year!

SCROOGE: Happy New Year. Bah! Humbug! (**SCROOGE exits.**)

CRATCHIT: (*CRATCHIT walks NEPHEW to the door.*) Do not take offense. He can be very harsh for no apparent reason. There are days, though rare they be, when his kind heart reveals itself. It is a pity how quickly it retreats. Instead of being with people, he spends much time alone. If not for you, he would have no one.

NEPHEW: The choice to be alone is his. He edges his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance. He has succeeded except for you and me! It is because he's my mother's brother that I am resolved to keep the bond with him alive. Good day. God bless. And Merry Christmas to you and yours.

CRATCHIT: God bless you too. Merry Christmas. (**SCROOGE reenters**)

**(BELL RINGS. Ladies Enter)**

LADY 1: Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. (*CRATCHIT indicates SCROOGE to the Ladies.*) Ah! Have I the pleasure of meeting Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE: Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. In fact, he died seven years ago this very night.

LADY 2: Our condolences, sir.

LADY 1 : We have no doubt his generosity is well represented by his surviving partner.

LADY 2 : (*As if memorized.*) At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute. Many thousands are in want, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Are there no prisons?

LADY 1: Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE: And the workhouses, are they still in operation?

LADY 2: They are, though I wish they were not .

SCROOGE: Oh! I was afraid, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course.

LADY 1: A few of us are trying to raise funds to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth.

LADY 2: It is at this time of year when want is keenly felt and abundance rejoices. What shall we put you down for?

SCROOGE: Nothing.

LADY 1: You wish to remain anonymous?

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone! Since you ask me what I wish, ladies, that is my answer. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned, and they cost enough. Those who are badly off must go there. Where are their parents? Why do I have to feed them? No. I pay taxes to help these so-called homeless, helpless children. And anyway, it is not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business and not to interfere with the business of others. Mine occupies me constantly. Their fathers should go out and get jobs.

LADY 1: Pardon me, Mr. Scrooge. You know that jobs are hard to find. There are just too many people looking for work and... their children suffer.

SCROOGE: Humbug. Then I say they should all starve and who cares if they get sick and die. Less mouths to feed. That will help rid us of the excess population. My father taught me to make money, save it, and never ask anyone for anything. Let them do the same. Good day, ladies.

LADY1&2: *(in disbelief/back and forth)* Starve? Die? Excess population? Do you know what you are saying?

TOGETHER: Where is your humanity?

SCROOGE: I said, good day?

LADY 2: But if you would only understand—

SCROOGE: What is there to understand? It's quite enough for a man to understand his own business and not interfere with other people's. Good afternoon, Ladies! See them out, Mr. Cratchit.

LADY 1: WELL I NEVER!

SCROOGE: And you NEVER WILL!

*(They EXIT, looking over their shoulders at SCROOGE as they do) (CRATCHIT looks at the clock when they've gone.)*

SCROOGE: *(To himself, as he begins counting coins.)* There's another one! Here is my clerk, fifteen shillings a week and a family to support, talking of a Merry Christmas! *(To CRATCHIT)* Yes, I see the clock, too, Cratchit. Five minutes past the hour. Well, I suppose little more can be done today anyway. Clear off your desk.

CRATCHIT: *(With a great smile, moves energetically to do so.)* Yes, sir, Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE: *(Stops him with.)* You'll be wanting the whole day off, tomorrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT: *(Meek.)* If quite convenient, sir?

SCROOGE: It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I were to dock you a day's pay, you'd think yourself mistreated. And yet, you don't consider me mistreated when I pay a day's wages for no work. (*SCROOGE gets his coat down off a peg and puts it on, preparing to leave.*)

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

SCROOGE: A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! Do you know that Christmas was invented by merchants to make people buy presents they cannot afford, presents that will never be used, presents that they do not even deserve? Oh! How I hate Christmas.

CRATCHIT: I am truly sorry you feel that way Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: (*Puts on his muffler.*) But, I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier the next morning!

CRATCHIT: Merry Christmas! Bah! Humbug!

SCROOGE: Christmas!? Bah! Humbug! (**Scrooge Exits.**)



**ACT 1, SCENE 2**

*(As SCROOGE goes homeward—)*

DOOR 1: Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern. Then, having gone over all the figures in his bankbook, he went home to bed in his gloomy rooms in his gloomy old building. Darkness is cheap. Scrooge liked it.

SCROOGE *(dyspeptic burp)*. Blast. Shouldn't have et that big meal. Eh? What's this?

DOOR 2: The fog and frost hung about the old black threshold of the building- where there was a large door-knocker. And then-this ghostly thing occurred...

***(The doorknocker appears.)***

SCROOGE. Marley? Jacob Marley? How did you turn into my doorknocker?

*(MARLEY's eyes fly open. SCROOGE yelps and turns away. MARLEY's eyes close. SCROOGE reaches toward the door:)*

SCROOGE. Humbug. It's a doorknocker after all. Too much food upsets the system-including the eyes. Time to go to bed...sleep it off... *(He shuffles inside as—)*

DOOR 1: Ah, what a dismal old house it was,

DOOR 2: ...lost in a hidden yard where it had so little business to be.

DOOR 1: One could imagine that it strayed there when it was a young house,

DOOR 2: ...and never found the way out.

DOOR 1: Nobody lived in it ...

DOOR 1 & 2: ...but Scrooge...

*(SCROOGE hangs up his scarf, finds a bottle, takes a large drink. Suddenly a distant MOAN.)*

SCROOGE. What's that? Did I bolt the door? *(Rushes to check it.)* Double locked-all secure. *(He puts on his nightcap, then hears CHAINS rattling.)*

MARLEY: *(offstage)*. Ebenezer Scrooge..

SCROOGE. I'm hearing things. *(Before he can find it, the CHAINS rattle more loudly. He jumps into bed, pulls up covers.)*

MARLEY: Scroo - oo - ge. *(pause.)* Scroo - oo - ge. **(MARLEY enters behind Scrooge. SCROOGE turns and shrieks.)**

SCROOGE: How did you get in here? Who are you?

MARLEY: You do not recognize me? Ask me who I was!

SCROOGE: All right then. Who were you?

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

SCROOGE: But Marley is dead. Has been these last seven years.

MARLEY: That is true. I am dead! Dead as a door-nail! But nevertheless, I have been sent to warn you.

SCROOGE: *(laughs)* What prank is this? Warn me of what?

MARLEY: *(Thunderous voice.)* Look at me Scrooge! This IS not a joke. *(SCROOGE backs up in fear.)* I have been sent to tell you that there is more to life than running a business and making money.

SCROOGE: Well, that is news to me. Marley would never say a thing like that. Why, he taught me everything I know about business.

MARLEY: Sadly so. In life, my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole. If I had the chance, I would not be as concerned with making money. We both made money at the expense of other people. Every one deserves a good life, Ebenezer. But we were tightfisted, overcharged whenever possible, and took people's last bit of money for food.

SCROOGE: *(HE waves off MARLEY'S words.)* Humbug! You exaggerate.

MARLEY: *(HE points to SCROOGE'S throat. The power in his hand causes SCROOGE to choke. MARLEY'S voice is filled with misery.)* You see these chains? They weigh more than I do and I must carry them forever. In life, I made these chains, link by link, yard by yard. Every time I did not care about people, another new link appeared. You wear the same chain.

SCROOGE. Where? I have no chains. I don't understand, Jacob -

MARLEY. Pleading is no use. I can't stay, I can't rest, I can't linger anywhere.

SCROOGE: But...but we were just good men of business, Jacob.

MARLEY'S GHOST: Business?! Mankind was our business! The common welfare was our business! Charity, mercy, forbearance, benevolence, were all my business. The true business of this world is to care for people. To be kind. To greet them with a generosity of spirit. But you, you will never be able to bear the weight of the chains you are making. Every day at least one new link appears. You are a mean man, Ebenezer Scrooge. Heed my words for penance is a weighty matter. (*SCROOGE looks down at his chest.*) In life, my chains were invisible to me, as yours are to you. The first time I saw them was when death took me by surprise. (*MARLEY hands SCROOGE the end of a chain and SCROOGE falls to the ground from the weight of it.*) Mine are sooo heavy I want to drag them on the ground but cannot. For you there is still time. For me, there is none. Change your ways, love people, and the links will fall away.

SCROOGE: (*SCROOGE waves his hand at MARLEY as if to dismiss him.*) You are not really there. This is a dream. I will wake up and this scary dream will be over.

MARLEY: Oh, man with a worldly mind, it is a pity you do not believe in my reality. Yes. I am here tonight to warn you that you still have a hope of escaping my fate. A hope—a chance—that I have arranged.

SCROOGE. Oh, thank you, thank you, Jacob

MARLEY (*interrupting*). Tonight you will be haunted by three spirits.

SCROOGE. Yes, thank you, I could always count on you for— (*Take.*) Haunted?!? Is that the hope you offer me?

MARLEY. It is.

SCROOGE. I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY. Hear me!! Without three visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I took. Expect the first spirit when the bell tolls one.

SCROOGE. Can't I take 'em all at once and get it over with?

MARLEY (*backing away*). Expect the second when the bell tolls two, and the last when the bell tolls three.

SCROOGE. Jacob, don't leave me!

MARLEY: Good Night Ebenezer. Change your ways or you will pay a heavy price later, and I am not talking about money...

SCROOGE: (*HE rubs his eyes as though clearing blurred vision. HE looks behind a few pieces of furniture and sits on the bed.*) Nothing there. Just a dream. Or maybe a little indigestion. Yes.

That's it. My stomach is upset. Something I ate. If I close my eyes and go to sleep, I will feel better in the morning. (*SCROOGE gets in bed.*) Chains. Links. Caring about people. Bah! Humbug!

*(Lights bump off. Sound of violent wind blowing through the trees.)*

SCROOGE. This can't be happening. The door is still locked. This is humbug, what else can it be?

**ACT 1, SCENE 3A**

*(Grandfather clock strikes one. SCROOGE is in bed, snoring. LIGHTS FADE UP TO ONE-HALF. SPOTLIGHT on THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS)*

**PAST as it enters.** *SLOW FADE WIND SOUND.*)

PAST: Scrooge! Wake up!

SCROOGE: *(SCROOGE jumps up in fear.)* Who are you? *(He rubs sleepiness from his eyes.)*  
Or should I say, what are you?

PAST: I am The Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE: So Marley was real.

PAST: As real as you are to your form, so he is to his.

SCROOGE: *(looks around perplexed)* Do What?

PAST: You do not understand many things, so pay attention. I have come to show you the past so you may learn from it and change your ways in the future.

SCROOGE: You!? Bah! Humbug!

PAST: *(Very loudly.)* What was that?

SCROOGE: *(cowering)* Oh. Nothing. Nothing your majesty.

PAST: I am not “your majesty.” *(PAST snaps for trick.)* I am The Ghost of Christmas Past and nothing more. *(PAST snaps for trick.)*

SCROOGE: *(crawling away)* Have mercy on me!

PAST: Mercy comes in many forms Scrooge. I am being merciful by taking you back in time.

SCROOGE: *(fearfully)* I am mortal. I cannot travel through time the way you do. I am liable to fall and get hurt.

PAST: *(Warmly.)* By letting me touch your heart you shall be upheld in this and more. *(SHE looks at SCROOGE for a sign of acceptance. When HE nods SHE speaks.)* We must depart from this place. Come, let us go ..  
*(Flashback.)*

NEPHEW: Uncle, you could have come to my wedding. Just five hours of your time. Life should not be about how much money you made today.

CRATCHIT: I did not ask for a raise; I asked for a loan. Tiny Tim needs medicine. Please Mr. Scrooge. I am a loyal employee. I will pay you back.

NARRATOR: (Travel Dialogue)

**ACT 1, SCENE 3B**

PAST: Do you remember this place?

SCROOGE: Good heavens! This is my old school! The Charity School. For children whose parents were too poor to care for them through the year. I was a boy here! But how?

PAST: They can't see you. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is still left here.

SCROOGE: Yes, of course. I forgot it was Christmas.

PAST: Your lip is trembling.

SCROOGE: Oh, it's nothing. Drafty old school! Always cold, you know.  
*(Pause.)* Poor boy. I wish... *(Then, from OFF RIGHT, a young girl's voice is heard, along with the clatter of her running footsteps. It is FAN, Scrooge's sister.)*

FAN: *(From OFFSTAGE.)* Ebenezer! Ebenezer!

YOUNG EBENEZER: Fan! *(YOUNG EBENEZER looks up, then stands with a smile as she ENTERS and approaches.)*

FAN: Dear brother! *(They embrace.)*

SCROOGE: *(With a tear in his voice.)* Fan!

YOUNG EBENEZER: *(At the same time.)* Fan! Fan, it's you! What brings you here now?

FAN: *(Cheerful.)* I've come to take you home, dear brother! To bring you home... home!

YOUNG EBENEZER: Home, Fan?

FAN: Yes, home – Home for good. Home forever and ever. Father is a changed man. He has a new job! He is so much kinder than he used to be. I asked him once more if you might come home, and he said, yes you should. So he sent me to bring you.

YOUNG EBENEZER: Oh, Fan, you are wonderful. *(Picks her up in their hug.)* This shall be the merriest Christmas ever!

FAN: The merriest time in all the world! *(FAN and YOUNG BOY SCROOGE embrace again.)*

PAST: *(To SCROOGE.)* Your sister was a delicate creature. So fragile. But she had a large heart.

SCROOGE: Oh, she did, you're right Spirit. She was younger, yet she was always my strong anchor. After our mother died, she took that role, and cared for me...

PAST: She died quite young, but had one child.

SCROOGE: Yes. Fan- !

SCROOGE. But I want to see her. Tell her how much she meant to me

PAST: Too late. Your chance was long ago. We must hurry on.

SCROOGE. Where?

PAST: To a much more pleasant and festive place.

*(Music. Lights begin to change. NARRATOR appears. As they swiftly "fly" to a new location.)*



**ACT 1, SCENE 3C**

PAST: Do you know this place?

FEZZIWIG: Yo ho there my lads!

SCROOGE. Know it? I was apprenticed here! *(Next scene begins.)* Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart, it's Fezziwig, alive again!

FEZZIWIG: *(In a rich voice.)* No more work tonight. It's Christmas Eve! Let's have the shutters up. Clear away these boxes! *(Claps his hands.)* Let's have some room for dancing, shall we? Dancing to-night-and tomorrow, a modest bonus for the best apprentices ever to cross the threshold of Fezziwig and Company. It's Christmas! Hand in Hand across the floor! If the music stops we'll ask for more!

PAST: Was there ever such a good master as Old Fezziwig?

SCROOGE: Not in this world. Or any other that I can imagine. Here's to Fezziwig.

PAST: What a small matter to make these silly folk so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE. Small?!

PAST: Yes, don't you think so? Fezziwig spent but a few pounds for this party. Four-perhaps five-is that so much that he deserves such praise?

SCROOGE. Oh, you've got it wrong, Spirit. It isn't the amount. He had the power to render us happy or un-happy. To make my service light or burdensome. His power lay in words and looks-things so slight and insignificant that it's impossible to add and count 'em up. *(Gazing at scene.)* I remember that party. The happiness he gave us was quite as great as if it cost a fortune. *(Starts forward.)*

SCROOGE. But I must speak to Fezziwig. And Belle...

PAST: No. My time grows short. Look here!

SCROOGE. Spirit, I beg you

*(Street outside FAN's house. EBENEZER rushes on with bouquet of flowers. He now wears a long cloak. He knocks on a door. FAN's HUSBAND appears, disheveled. He carries a lantern.)*

**ACT 1, SCENE 3D**

FAN'S HUSBAND. Ebenezer.

EBENEZER. I came the moment I received your message. How is Fan?

FAN'S HUSBAND. She—(*Stops.*)

EBENEZER (*agitated*). What is it? Tom-how is my sister?

FAN'S HUSBAND. She gave birth to a handsome son.

EBENEZER. Oh, Fan! (*Starts to enter. FAN's HUSBAND holds him back.*)

FAN'S HUSBAND. The doctor is with her. He has done all that he can. (*Baby cries within.*) We had already decided to name the boy Fred.

EBENEZER. Fred! (*Hurls bouquet to the ground.*) I warned her that the ordeal might be too much.

FAN'S HUSBAND. I know. But we both wanted a child so badly.

EBENEZER. Was she in pain?

FAN'S HUSBAND. Yes, Ebenezer, it grieves me to tell you she was.

SCROOGE. I remember, Spirit. Ah, how I remember.

PAST: And then everything began to change...This way

**ACT 1, SCENE 3E**

SCROOGE: I can't believe it. Miss Belle.

PAST: The girl you were meant to marry.

SCROOGE. Yes-we were betrothed to each other by our parents when we were no more than sixteen. It was not long before I loved her. Oh, how I loved her...

BELLE: I love Ebenezer, but I almost never see him.

SCROOGE: I loved you too, Belle. I have never stopped loving you.

PAST: Sh-h-h! She can't hear you. These are but shadows of the things that have been. They do not know we are here.

BELLE: He stays in that office of his all day, counting money, making sure that his business is well taken care of while I sit at home and wait. I am lonely. I want him here with me.

SCROOGE: I worked hard for you Belle, for us, to make money to secure our future.

PAST: Sh-h-h!

SCROOGE: (*holds ear*) Ouch! What is the matter with you? I am not deaf. Although, another sh-h-h like that and I might be.

FRIEND: He loves you Belle. Why don't you tell him how you feel? Tell him you know his work is important to him and it is to you too. Tell him you fear that he will work even longer hours when you are married and have children and then you will never see each other.

BELLE: I have... many times.

SCROOGE: (*to PAST*) She did, you know. (*to BELLE*) My dear, sweet Belle. I was so foolish to let you go. I was a happy man then. (*To PAST, nearly begging.*) Let me speak to her. Let me tell her what a fool I was.

BELLE: The man I fell in love with no longer exists. My heart cannot reconcile how much he has changed. He fears the world too much and weighs everything by how much money a person has. Ebenezer was once a man with noble aspirations. They fell away one by one as thoughts of making money consumed him. Oh, it is no use. His reasons for working are many. Tonight is Christmas Eve and where is he? Working. Every year... no... every day, it is the same thing. The business comes first before our life together. He thinks of nothing else. His master-passion is an idol of gold and that idol has displaced me. This is not the life I want. (*BELLE takes off the engagement ring.*) Tonight I will set him free. Tonight I will give him back our engagement ring.

SCROOGE: And she did the saddest day of my life.

PAST: It is true that you have not felt love for many years. You have forgotten its significance.

SCROOGE: We were in love.

PAST: Ah, yes, you were. Love. Do you remember how that feels? Have you gained even the slightest understanding of what you have lost? (SCROOGE nods regretfully.) She truly cared about you and loved you. You have no one in your life that you can say that about now, have you?

SCROOGE: No. But I have always loved Belle and still do. If I had the chance again, I would–

PAST: But you do not have that chance. The past is gone. The only thing you can change is the present moment and the future. Good-bye Ebenezer Scrooge.

*(PAST exits.)*

SCROOGE: Wait! Don't go! We were just getting to know each other! *(HE looks around the room, frightened.)* Oh! What have I gotten myself into here? If the second ghost is anything like the first, I will be all right. I will be all right.

## ACT 1, SCENE 4A

*(Stage is dark. SCROOGE is in bed, snoring. MUSIC FADES. Grandfather clock strikes two. SL LIGHTS UP one quarter. THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT comes down the aisle carrying a very large duffel bag filled with all sorts of things. Present is a bumbling talker. The actor should improvise comedic business for Present to do.)*

PRESENT: *(At the beginning of the aisle.)* Does anybody know where one Ebenezer Scrooge lives? *(PRESENT waits for audience reaction. IT walks down the aisle flipping through pages of a small hard covered book.)* That lump is Ebenezer Scrooge? *(PRESENT finds the page it is looking for. IT looks at the page then back to SCROOGE then back to the page.)* Ah yes. Well, he has lost some weight, hasn't he? *(PRESENT closes the book and talks as if to itself.)* Boo. Boo. Boo Scrooge! *(Disappointed with itself.)* Not good. Not good at all. Just go up there. You're wasting time. Boo! *(As PRESENT comes on stage it trips and falls on the floor.)* Don't you have any candles? Let's get some light in here. It's so dark, I can't see a thing! First the ghost bus is late. Now this. It's just not my millennium.

SCROOGE: *(laughs)* Oh no. Not another one.  
*(SL lights fade up.)*

PRESENT: I have had a really hard day. Actually, I've had a really hard 300 years. I don't need snide remarks. You are a very critical man, Scrooge! Somebody trips, or should I say, some thing trips, and you have to make a comment. You should be over here helping me instead.

SCROOGE: *(laughs)* You are a ghost... I think. You should not need my help.

PRESENT: How convenient for you. Just in case you care to know, I am The Ghost of Christmas Present. My job is to show you how your treatment of people affects their lives. *(IT opens the book and runs finger down the page as if reading.)* I can tell you right now, you're not doing too good in my book.

SCROOGE: *(sarcastically)* Ooooo. I am sooooo scared.

PRESENT: Just because I trip and fall and sometimes I can't see well in the dark... Oh, no! *(to self)* That's why I tripped! I forgot to put on my Ghost shades! *(to audience)* About me tripping coming in. So embarrassing. Really. I've got to find my Ghost shades. *(He takes the huge bag and looks inside. Its voice is childlike as it pulls two dolls from the bag who are supposed to be talking to each other.)* Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? *(PRESENT puts them back in the bag and takes out a menorah or Jack-O-Lantern or a chocolate Easter bunny. Its voice is normal again. It is embarrassed.)* Wrong holiday! *(IT puts the item back in the bag and takes out a bottle of deodorant and sprays it on.)* Long bus trip. *(IT finally finds the sunglasses, turns its back to the audience and puts them on. It does a little "cool thing" - improvises, then speaks directly to the audience.)* I know what you're thinking! If he couldn't see

well before because it was too dark, how are those sunglasses going to help? The dark will be even darker. Wrong.

*(With its back to the audience, IT goes into the duffel bag and whips out a flashlight. It turns it on and spins around, flashing the light everywhere, like a search light, ending with the light on SCROOGE'S face.)*

SCROOGE: *(laughing harder)* This thing is going to teach me! I think not.

PRESENT: I do things that may not be your way of doing them, but that doesn't mean you should laugh at me. I deserve your respect. But actually, that doesn't matter so much because I respect myself. Scrooge, your treatment of people, and now ghosts, is awful. I was sent to teach you lessons, so here we go, whether you want to or not. *(He turns on the flashlight and, with physical difficulty, acts as though the light has the ability to pull in BOB CRATCHIT, his wife, and TINY TIM. THEY enter SR. Lights fade up on them. THEY are motionless.)* Oh Never mind!

PRESENT: *(In a rich, booming voice.)* Get up! Get up and know me better, man! *(SCROOGE rises timidly, hanging his head.)* I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! Have you never seen the like of me before?

SCROOGE: Spirit, I know you're here for my own good. Take me wherever you want. If you have anything to teach me, I'm ready to learn.

PRESENT: Touch my robe! And together we shall go abroad and witness the living Christmas, the day as it is, in the souls and hearts of men, who know me well.

**ACT 1, SCENE 4B**

PRESENT: Do you know who these people are?

SCROOGE: No. Where is this, Spirit? Who are these people?

PRESENT: You really do not know?

SCROOGE: Never seen them before in my life. *(Two smaller CHILDREN, a boy and a girl, ENTER energetically from the stage darkness yelling and screaming.)*

PRESENT: Your employee, Bob Cratchit's family.

PETER: *(To MARTHA.)* You should see! There's such a goose, Martha!

MARTHA: Is there really?

ALICE: Can't you smell it?

MRS. CRATCHIT: Now, now, you two stand by the window and wait for your father. He and your brother should be along any minute. *(PETER and ALICE go to one side and look out a window.)*

PRESENT: This is the house of your employee, Scrooge.

SCROOGE: What? Cratchit? *(Looks about.)* He does rather well for himself.

PRESENT: *(Smiles.)* You're seeing them on a good day.

PETER: Father is coming!

BELINDA: Hide, Martha Hide!

MARTHA: Hide?

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(At the same time.)* Why?

BELINDA: We can tell father that she had to work all day.

MARTHA: Oh, all right. Where should I hide?

PETER: Over here! *(Points to the far side.)*

WILLIAM: Here he comes!

BELINDA: Hurry, Martha. (*MARTHA hides. In comes CRATCHIT in his Sunday best with TINY TIM perched on his left shoulder. TINY TIM carries a rude wooden crutch, and when he is put down, hobbles on it over to his seat at the table.*)

CRATCHIT: (*Surveys the room as he lets the child down.*) Why, where's our Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT: Oh, she's not coming.

CRATCHIT: Not coming? Not coming on Christmas Day?

MARTHA: (*Steps out of hiding.*) Here I am, Father!

CRATCHIT: Ahhh! Martha! (*They hug.*)

MRS. CRATCHIT: Now, Martha, why don't you all go and bring the goose, and set the table. (***Children Exit.***) And how did little Tim behave in church?

CRATCHIT: As good as gold, and better. Sometimes he gets so thoughtful, he says the strangest things. He told the kind Father that when the people see a little crippled boy like me/him, maybe they will remember the birthday of the one who made lame beggars walk and blind men see. (*Pause. Trembling.*) The boy's wisdom is beyond his young years. After saying that, he was actually able to walk a bit without my help. He seems to be growing stronger and more hearty.

MRS. CRATCHIT: (*to TINY TIM*) My dear sweet child. You are getting stronger every day.

TINY TIM: God bless us, every one.  
(***Tiny Tim Exits***)

CRATCHIT: He knows God will provide everything he needs to make him well. I wish I had his faith. He is getting stronger, isn't he? It is not just wishful thinking?

(***Children interrupt as they reenter***)

CRATCHIT: Let us be thankful for the food we are about to eat. May God grant that we all are grateful on this day for the bounty he has given us. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

SCROOGE: (*Quiet.*) Amen.

PRESENT: (*To SCROOGE.*) Did you say something?



SCROOGE: Oh, no, no...

CRATCHIT: *(While pouring a glass of wine for his wife and another for himself, HE speaks.)* Let us give thanks for all we have. We are rich beyond our wildest dreams.

SCROOGE: *(to PRESENT)* Rich! Does he have money I do not know about?

PRESENT: Riches come in many forms Scrooge, not just in silver and gold.

CRATCHIT: Let us toast to God, to our children and our health, to the house we live in and to the man who made our feast of goose possible, my employer, Ebenezer Scrooge.  
*(SCROOGE smiles sarcastically at the Ghost of Christmas Present.)*

ALL: Mr. Scrooge!!

*(PRESENT motions to SCROOGE to pay attention.)*

MRS. CRATCHIT: Feast! I think not. I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon. We should have a goose twice the size, at least. I will not drink to that horrible man.

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug! To you, too, lady.

PRESENT: She is right. You are supposed to be learning from this. And, oh yes. Save your words. They can't hear you.

CRATCHIT: What is wrong my dear?

MRS. CRATCHIT: You want me to drink to that... that... squeezing, clutching, miserable old goat who has not increased your salary in five years! That miser whose bank account grows larger every minute of the day. Absolutely not! He has the power to make our lives better but does nothing. He takes advantage of you knowing that steady employment is nearly impossible to find. And what is the outcome of that? Our dear sweet Tim cannot go to the proper doctors or eat the proper food to make him well because this man you want to toast pays a pauper's wage and we don't have the money to—— *(SHE cries. CRATCHIT consoles her.)*

PRESENT: *(crying)* Do you see what your stinginess has done? Look at the heartache of this family. That poor little boy needs a doctor's care and healthy food, but they can't afford to give it to him. She's right not to raise her glass to you. The strange thing is, Bob Cratchit seems to like you well enough to do so. Thank goodness, for you, there are a few people who see passed your petty, self-serving ways.  
*(Begin a slow fade of SR lights.)*

SCROOGE: I should have been kinder to Cratchit today. I will make up for it.

PRESENT: You can't "make up for it." The past is gone.

SCROOGE: I thought his wage was sufficient. I did not know he had such a sickly child. How long will it take for the boy to get well?

PRESENT: If the boy does not receive healthy food and a doctor's care, he will not see another Christmas.

SCROOGE: Surely you are joking. Are you saying that Tiny Tim will die?

PRESENT: Yes. But what do you care? His death should not concern you.

SCROOGE: I do not understand.

PRESENT: Let his parents take care of him. He is not your concern. *(Reading from the book, IT emphasizes the words SCROOGE used earlier.)* If he dies, there will be one less mouth to feed. If he dies, that will help rid us of the excess population.

SCROOGE: I see. My own words sent to haunt me. Very clever, but I can see this boy. He is very real to me.

*(SR light fade should be complete as CRATCHIT and MRS. CRATCHIT exit.)*

PRESENT: And the children you cannot see, are they any less real? No, Ebenezer Scrooge. Every child is every man's responsibility. Caring about people and loving them should be your main business. Heed my words. If the children of today are not given love and respect, they will grow into adults who will become the downfall of humanity.

SCROOGE: What you say is more frightening than any ghost.

**ACT 1, SCENE 4C**

PRESENT: (*After a pause, to SCROOGE.*) Come, let us visit another house this day. Touch my robe. (*The LIGHTS COME UP on the interior of FRED'S house.*)

FRED: (*Laughs heartily for a few seconds with TOPPER, BESS, and the OTHERS at his Christmas party joining in, but not quite as merrily, then.*) And he meant it, too! A humbug! That was his exact word.

TOPPER: Your uncle sounds like quite a comical character, Fred.

FRED: Oh, he is, he is. More because he considers himself so seriously.

CLARA: Is he as rich as they say?

FRED: Oh, I expect so. Not that his money does him any good. He doesn't even make himself comfortable with it.

BESS: I don't see how you have patience with him.

FRED: I feel sorry for him.

SCROOGE: (*Indignant.*) Sorry!

FRED: Who suffers most from his ill whims? Why, he himself.

CLARA: He misses a very good meal.

FRED: Exactly. And he misses the fellowship of loved ones, but I mean to ask him to dine with us every year, no matter what. (*As BESS fills his glass.*)

TOPPER: Fred, let's play a game.

CLARA: Yes, let's play a game.

FRED: Great Idea Topper! What shall it be?

TOPPER: Our favorite! "Yes or No!" I will start! (*prepares*) I am thinking of something which is neither a vegetable or mineral, but an animal.

RAUCOUS LADY: It's the big fat goose Sara's cooking—I know it.

TOPPER: No, I'm afraid it is not. The animal in question has absolutely nothing to do with this blessed holiday.

FRED: Hey, Topper—no clues. Yes and no- that is all.

TOPPER: Sorry. (*The following should go quickly-a "brisk fire" as Dickens puts it The game steadily gathers momentum, with all the GUESTS-and SCROOGE— engrossed and excited.*)

CLARA: Is it a live animal?

TOPPER: Yes.

SERENITY: Is it in this room?

TOPPER: Oh, no.

JON-ANTHONY: Is it savage?

TOPPER: Yes!

FRED: Is it in a zoo or museum?

TOPPER: No.

SCROOGE: I say-this is intriguing. (*Moves a little closer.*)

BESS: Is this animal ever killed in a market?

TOPPER: No.

CLARA: But it is a disagreeable animal?

TOPPER:(*stifling mirth*) Oh, yes.

SERENITY: Does it grunt and growl sometimes?

TOPPER: Oh Yes!

SCROOGE: (*shooting up his hand*) I know, I know!

BESS: Does it walk about the streets?

TOPPER: Yes.

SCROOGE: Is it a performing bear? (*No one hears him. Instead*)

CLARA: *(excited)* It's a bear!

TOPPER: *(thinks it over for a beat)* No.

JON-ANTHONY: Is this animal led around by someone?

TOPPER: No, it is not.

SERENITY: *(To another)* Then it definitely can't be a bear. *(SCROOGE is busy whispering questions to the PRESENT. FRED has guessed the answer, and looks less cheerful.)*

FRED: Topper, is it a horse?

TOPPER: No.

JON-ANTHONY: A dog?

TOPPER: No.

RAUCOUS LADY: A pig?

TOPPER: No.

CLARA: A cat?

TOPPER: No.

BESS: But it walks around ...And it's very disagreeable...

RAUCOUS LADY. Does it talk?

TOPPER: *(knows she's got it)* Yes.

RAUCOUS LADY: Topper! I know what it is!

SCROOGE: *(practically beside himself)* What? What?

*(All the GUESTS stare at RAUCOUS LADY, waiting.)*

RAUCOUS LADY *(To FRED)*. It's your uncle S-c-r-O-O-g-e!

TOPPER. Yes! *(Reactions from GUESTS. SCROOGE looks as if someone bludgeoned him.)*

CLARA: But Topper, you misled us. I distinctly recall asking you, "Is it a bear?"-to which you answered "no"-which was enough to distract everyone from thinking about Mr. Scrooge!  
(*Agreement. SCROOGE looks sick.*)

TOPPER. Well... sorry, my dear. (*laughs*)

RAUCOUS LADY: (*to FRED*) But he said the animal had nothing to do with Christmas, and that's true enough, isn't it? Your uncle never joins these festivities, does he?

FRED: He says Christmas is a humbug. He believes it, too.

SARA: He's a pitiful creature.

FRED: I suppose that's true. But in some ways he's a funny old man... though Topper is right, he does growl and snap too much. (*Arm around SARA.*)

TOPPER: Your Uncle is VERY rich isn't he?

FRED: Yes, but so what? His wealth is of no use to anyone. He doesn't do any good with it but I can't be angry with him. I feel sorry for him. Who suffers from his bad temper? He does - What's the result? He misses out on dinner.

SARA: A very good dinner.

FRED: I was just about to say that, my love.

SARA: I have no patience with him. I see no reason to invite him again—ever.

FRED: Oh, no. I intend to give him the same opportunity every year—whether he likes it or not. He can complain about Christmas until he dies, but maybe he'll start to change his mind if he sees me going to his office, cheerful as ever, year after year, and saying— (*He looks at SCROOGE, imitating him.*) "Uncle Scrooge, how are you?" (*In a gruff voice.*) "How am I? I'm not in the Christmas spirit. Humbug. Humbug!"

(*GUESTS laugh. A SERVANT enters with a tray of mulled wine. FRED hands one to SARA before taking one for himself, continuing:*)

FRED: I shook him yesterday, I could tell. I'll definitely keep trying. In the meantime... he's given us plenty of entertainment this evening, and it would be ungrateful of us not to drink to his health. So here's to Uncle Scrooge. A merry Christmas and a happy New Year to him— wherever he is. He wouldn't accept it from me, but he'll get it anyway. (*Raising his cup.*) Uncle Scrooge!

A Christmas Carol – Faith Works 2024 – V3.2 12/2/2024

ALL GUESTS: Yes! Uncle Scrooge! (*They all raise their cups.*)

SCROOGE: A pack of fools, giggling and shouting like children.

PRESENT: They were festive. I had the impression you were enjoying it.

SCROOGE: Never! Lead on!

**ACT 1, SCENE 4D**

PRESENT: Come, Scrooge, my time with you tonight is nearly finished. Touch my robe.  
*(SCROOGE does, and the LIGHTS GO OUT suddenly. They are out in a cold moonlit alley, late into the night.)*

SCROOGE: Spirit, why have you taken me here? Where are we?

PRESENT: It is a place. I have one more thing to show you.

SCROOGE: But it's dark, it's cold... can't we go back to my bedroom?

PRESENT: You have an appointment in this place, Scrooge.

SCROOGE: I? An appointment? *(PRESENT moves away from SCROOGE and faces him from some little distance.)*

PRESENT: O man, look here! *(Opens the bottom of his robe, revealing two wretched CHILDREN, IGNORANCE and WANT.)* Behold! **SONG: Someday at Christmas**

SCROOGE: *(Appalled, but his eyes are transfixed.)* Spirit, who are they?

PRESENT: *(In a deep, echoing voice.)* They represent humanity. See how they cling to me? This boy is Ignorance, and the girl is Want. Be careful of them both, but especially of this boy, for his brow bears the mark of mankind's doom.

SCROOGE: Do they have no place to go, Spirit?

PRESENT: *(Wrapping his robe tightly around himself and starting to leave.)* Are there no prisons? *(His voice fades as he walks away, repeating the words.)* Are there no workhouses? Oh! I was afraid that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course...

SCROOGE: *(pleading)* Spirit, make me visible! I must talk to them! I want to talk with my nephew and niece! To Bob!

PRESENT: I cannot. No time. I have overstayed my visit as it is.

SCROOGE: Just one minute with them is all that I ask.

PRESENT: *(Looks at watch.)* I must be going. I can't miss the next ghost bus. Another won't come for who knows how long.

*(SCROOGE helps PRESENT up. PRESENT pulls away from SCROOGE and does funny, rubbery-leg-movements.)*



PRESENT: God be with you. Good-bye Ebenezer Scrooge.  
***(PRESENT walks up the audience aisle to exit.)***

SCROOGE: No wait! Don't leave me just yet! I have changed! Maybe you can put in a word for me so the next ghost does not have to come.

PRESENT: *(sarcastically)* I don't think so!

SCROOGE: Wait!

PRESENT: Live with it, Scrooge.

SCROOGE: *(HE looks around his room frightfully, sits in the armchair, and puts the blanket over his legs.)* Marley said the next ghost could appear at any time. It must be The Ghost of Christmas Future. I do not want to know the future. Why am I so afraid? *(HE laughs nervously and looks at the reflection of his face in the window.)* My face in the morning is scarier than those two ghosts were. Just one more ghost and this horrible night will be over. *(SCROOGE looks around impatiently. Times passes. No one comes.)* Maybe the Ghost of Christmas Present saw that I am serious about treating people differently, with kindness and love. Maybe it told the next ghost not to come. Who knows? *(HE yawns and stretches.)* | will try to sleep. Two silly ghosts in one night is a lot for any man.

***(Music. Ghost of Yet To Come Appears) (Blackout)***

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT 2, SCENE 1**

SCROOGE: Spirit? *(Pause.)* Am I now in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?

*(No answer. The GHOST points at something.)*

SCROOGE *(nervously)*: What does that mean? *(No answer.)* Never mind, I understand. You're about to show me the shadows of things that haven't happened yet, but will happen in the future. Is that right?

*(The GHOST pulls its hand back into its sleeve. SCROOGE is now in a panic.)*

SCROOGE: Please, say something. I'm more afraid of you than the other spirits. *(He struggles to stay calm.)* Just speak to me!

*(Once again, the GHOST points.)*

SCROOGE: Lead on, then. The night is almost over—and there's not much time left. Lead on! *(They move into a dim area where they encounter the CHAR-WOMAN, the LAUNDRESS, and the UNDERTAKER'S MAN, all walking with bundles of stolen goods. Sinister music plays.)*

UNDERTAKER'S MAN: Which way?

CHARWOMAN: Down there.

UNDERTAKER'S MAN: The passageway? There's barely enough room for a rat to get through there.

LAUNDRESS: Too bad, that's the way to Old Joe's. I'm sure your natural greed will help you get through just fine. It'll help us all. *(She lifts a large bundle that rattles and clinks.)*

CHARWOMAN: Hey, roll those bed curtains up better. The rings are making too much noise. What if one of the cops comes by?

LAUNDRESS: And what would they do? Arrest us for stealing a few things from the rooms and bodies of the dead?

CHARWOMAN: Shh!

LAUNDRESS: Shut up and go home if you're scared. The man's dead and gone, and no one in this miserable world cares about him. *(The UNDERTAKER'S MAN snickers and nods. The LAUNDRESS drags her bundle away. The others follow.)*

NARRATOR: Although Scrooge was curious about what these unsavory people were saying and where they were going, the spirit insisted on leading him away to a better part of town. They moved toward the steps of the Commercial Exchange, right in the heart of the city... (*Lights fade on DICKENS, and the next scene begins.*)

**Act 2, SCENE 2**

*(Lights come up on marble steps. Prosperous BUSINESSMEN are walking up and down, while others stop to chat.)*

MAN 1: *(stopping)* How's it going?

MAN 2: *(also stopping)* Pretty good, how about you?

MAN 1 *(holding up a newspaper)* Well, looks like old Scratch finally got his, huh?

MAN 2: That's what I heard. *(Changing the subject.)* Pretty cold, isn't it?

MAN 1: Just right for Christmas.

MAN 3: *(a fop)* Nah, I don't know much about it either way. All I know is, he's dead.

MAN 2: When did it happen?

MAN 3: Last night, I think.

MAN 2: *(with a snuff box)* I'm shocked. He was so cold and tight-fisted, I thought he'd never die. What was the cause?

MAN 3: Who knows? *(He yawns.)*

MAN 2: What's he done with his money?

MAN 3: *(another yawn)* Haven't heard. Maybe he left it to his company? He sure didn't leave it to me. *(Laughter.)* I bet it'll be a cheap funeral —because I don't know anyone who's going.

MAN 1: Should we chip in and make up a party?

MAN 2: I'll go if there's lunch. But I have to be fed. *(Laughter again.)*

MAN 3: I'm the least interested, though. I don't wear black gloves, and I don't do lunch. But I'll go if anyone else does. *(Lights begin to fade on them.)*

MAN 2 But only if there's lunch.

MAN 1: Oh, absolutely. Why else would anyone go?

SCROOGE: Are these men really that heartless, Spirit? A man has died, and all they care about is food. And where am I? I'm usually at the Exchange at this time of day. Where am I, Spirit?

**ACT 2, SCENE 3**

*(Music plays downstage, dimly lit.)*

NARRATOR: Scrooge and the spirit left the busy city scene and ventured into a poorer part of town. The streets were dirty and narrow, the buildings were run-down, and the people were half-dressed, drunk, and ugly. The alleys and tenements, like open sewers, spewed their smells, filth, and misery into the streets. *(Pause.)* In the middle of this grim quarter, there was a shop that sold iron, old rags, bottles, and bones.

*(The shop appears. There's a counter with a small slate and chalk on it, a stool or two, and piles of old iron—rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, and weights. OLD JOE, the owner, is busy behind the counter. He's ancient, long-haired, and grimy, puffing on an old pipe. The LAUNDRESS enters, looking around nervously, carrying a large bundle. SCROOGE and the GHOST continue to watch.)*

OLD JOE: Well, well. If it isn't my favorite laundress. Got something for Old Joe?

LAUNDRESS: *(throwing down the bundle)* Plenty. *(The CHARWOMAN enters with a smaller bundle. She's followed by the UNDERTAKER'S MAN, wearing a black top hat and an armband.)*

OLD JOE: Aye, look at this—here's the charwoman, too, and the undertaker's man. The vultures are circling. *(He kicks the bundle.)* Look at them gather!

CHARWOMAN: Don't be so smug, Joe. Everyone's got to look out for themselves. Scrooge always did.

LAUNDRESS: True, very true.

OLD JOE: So, you've brought me stolen goods then? I don't like dealing with stolen goods.

UNDERTAKER'S MAN: Come on, Joe. Who's gonna miss a few cheap things? Not a dead man. *(The WOMEN snicker.)* And no one will ever know. There wasn't a soul with him when he croaked, and we only came in after to clean up the place—and me to clean him up.

LAUNDRESS: If he wanted to keep his stuff after he died, he should've acted like it while he was alive. If he'd been decent, someone would've been there for him when death hit. But he died all alone.

UNDERTAKER'S MAN: *(hand over his heart)* By himself.

CHARWOMAN: That's the truth.

LAUNDRESS: It's a judgment on him.

CHARWOMAN: So let's get to business.

LAUNDRESS: Open up my bundle, Joe. Let me know how much it's worth.

OLD JOE: No, let's start with the smallest first. *(To UNDERTAKER'S MAN.)* What've you got?

UNDERTAKER'S MAN: *(pulls out a small bundle from a handkerchief and unrolls it on the counter)* I was busier than they were. All I got was the pencil case, a pair of buttons, a seal or two, and that brooch.

OLD JOE: *(examining the items)* Nothing special. *(He writes on the slate.)* That's your payment.

UNDERTAKER'S MAN: Come on, Joe.

OLD JOE: That's it and not another penny. There's a risk here. *(Whispering.)* It's stolen goods.

*(UNDERTAKER'S MAN shrugs, resigned. OLD JOE pays him from his wallet. He turns to the CHARWOMAN.)* You're next, miss.

CHARWOMAN *(shooting an angry look at LAUNDRESS)*: Some of us did what we were supposed to, and took advantage of... *(She pulls out boots, old coats, towels, and a fine bedsheet.)* ... here's the best part: teaspoons and a pair of sugar tongs. Solid silver.

OLD JOE *(examining them, writing on the slate)* I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine... *(Shows the slate.)* There's your payment.

CHARWOMAN: But—

OLD JOE *(interrupting)*: Ask for another penny and I'll regret being so generous. I'll knock off of it. *(She gives up. He pays her from the wallet.)* All right, Mrs. Dilbert *(It takes some effort for LAUNDRESS to open her big bundle. OLD JOE comes around to help her, and the others are watching. SCROOGE looks horrified. OLD JOE kneels to pull out a large roll of drapery cloth, and the rings jangle.)* What do you call these?

LAUNDRESS: Bed curtains. The finest. *(OLD JOE'S wallet is on the counter behind him. LAUNDRESS eyes it while he's busy with the bundle.)*

OLD JOE: You mean to say you took these down with the man lying there dead?

LAUNDRESS: I did. Why not?

OLD JOE: *(chuckling)* You were born to make a fortune, Mrs. Dilbert. And you certainly will.

LAUNDRESS: Well, I'm not going to hold back when I can get something by just reaching out for it. *(She takes money from the wallet and hides it.)* Especially around the likes of him. *(JOE is pulling out more stuff.)* Don't get dirt on those blankets!

OLD JOE: His blankets?

LAUNDRESS: Who else's do you think? He won't need them now! - I bet. *(Laughter.)*

OLD JOE: I hope he didn't die of something contagious — *(He quickly puts the blankets aside and holds up a shirt.)*

LAUNDRESS: You can look at that shirt all you want, but you won't find any holes. It's the finest he had—pure silk. *(Indicating UNDERTAKER'S MAN.)* The Undertaker's Man would've wasted it, if it wasn't for me.

***Silent Night - Cratchit Children***

**ACT 2, SCENE 4**

*(A spotlight comes up on TINY TIM's empty stool. The lights then shift to the Cratchit household. A black wreath hangs on the mantel. A tea kettle is hanging on a hook inside the hearth. Cups and saucers are set on the table. PETER is reading. BELINDA and MRS. CRATCHIT are sewing. MARTHA enters with a candle, places it on the table, and begins to sew. MRS. CRATCHIT's gaze is drawn to the empty stool. She suddenly covers her eyes.)*

MARTHA: Mother?

MRS. CRATCHIT: It's just the sewing that's hurting my eyes, that's all. *(She sets her sewing aside.)*

SCROOGE: It's not the sewing, is it, Spirit? It's the empty spot by the fire.

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(rubbing her eyes)* There, that's better. Are my eyes red?

MARTHA: No, Mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Good. I wouldn't want them to be red when your father comes home. Not for the world. *(She stands.)* It must be almost time.

PETER: Actually, it's past time. But he's walking a little slower than he used to Mother. *(There's a brief, heavy silence.)*

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(trying to sound strong)* I've known him to walk with Tim on his shoulder—and go very fast indeed.

PETER: So have I.

BELINDA: So have we all, Mother.

WILLIAM: He's home!

***(BOB CRATCHIT enters. He wears a long white scarf, a tall hat, and mittens with most of the fingers worn through.)***

MRS. CRATCHIT: Welcome home, my dear. Your tea is ready, piping hot.

PETER: Good evening, sir.

CRATCHIT: *(distractedly)* Peter.

MARTHA: *(kissing his cheek)* Father.



BELINDA: *(giving him a hug)* Papa. *(She holds him a little longer than usual, a hidden moment of comfort. One of the girls helps him with his things while MRS. CRATCHIT pours and serves his tea. BOB sits and begins to examine the sewing.)*

CRATCHIT: This is very fine work.

MRS. CRATCHIT: It will be ready for my customer on Friday.

WILLIAM: That means we can buy flowers for Sunday, sir.

CRATCHIT: Yes, that's good. We must take flowers, by all means.

MRS. CRATCHIT: *(hesitant)* Did you go there today, Robert?

CRATCHIT: Yes, my dear. On my way home. I wish you could have gone with me. It would have done you good to see how green the place is, even in winter. *(He takes her hand.)* But you'll see it often. I promised him I would walk there on Sundays. *(He moves toward the stool.)* My child. My little child. *(He breaks down, hiding his face. The others wait, helpless, until he recovers after a moment.)* I'm sorry, I shouldn't. I must remember the good things. The good times... *(He drinks some tea.)* Do you know who I met in the street when I left the office? Mr. Scrooge's nephew, Fred. It was extraordinary. I've only met him a few times, and always at the office. But he stopped me and greeted me so kindly. He said I looked just a little down. *(He smiles.)* I told him why, and he said, "I'm so sorry, Mr. Cratchit, and so sorry for your good wife and family." He asked about each of you—your names, your situations—and then he gave me this. *(He pulls out a calling card.)* His card. "If I can be of service to you," he said, "that's where I live. Come by anytime, and don't hesitate." *(He hands the card to MRS. CRATCHIT.)* It was quite delightful to see him..

MRS. CRATCHIT: He must be a good soul.

CRATCHIT: You can be sure of it. *(Beat.)*

I think... I do think I might call on him, too. *(He turns to PETER.)* To see if we can get Peter into a better work situation.

MRS. CRATCHIT: You hear that, Peter?

BELINDA *(clapping her hands)*: And if that happens, Peter will soon be keeping company with someone—and setting up for himself!

PETER *(grinning)*: What?!

CRATCHIT: (*cheerful again*) It's just as likely as not. I am happy. Here with you all I am very happy. But however and whenever we part from one another, we will not forget our Tim — the first parting in our family.

ALICE: Never, Papa.

SCROOGE: I cannot bear another minute of this! Please take me from here.

**ACT 2, SCENE 5**

SCROOGE: Spirit, I feel something telling me that our time together is almost over. So, I must know—are the shadows we've seen the shadows of things that *\*will\** be, or are they the shadows of things that *\*might\** be? (*No answer. SCROOGE grows desperate.*) You must tell me! If I'm to correct my life/course, I need to know—and one more thing, though I fear I already know it. Who was the dead man those three vultures mocked as they stole from him? (*Beat.*) Spirit, I beg you! Tell me his name!

*(The GHOST points. A tombstone and a grave appear in the mist. Music underscores SCROOGE's trembling approach. He kneels and brushes his palm across the stone, silently reading the inscription. He turns to face the audience, horrified. Music swells.)*

SCROOGE: "Ebenezer Scrooge." (*He stands.*) I am the man? The one they plundered because it made no difference? The one who was mocked on the steps of the Exchange? No, Spirit—no! No! (*He runs to the GHOST, clutching its robe.*) Hear me! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I would have been, but for these visitations. There must be hope—why else would you show me all of this?

*(The GHOST pulls away, slowly moving upstage, facing front again.)*

SCROOGE: (*following*) I will change! I'll honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all year long. The spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Future will all live within me. I'll never shut out the lessons they teach. Just tell me that's possible. (*A desperate cry.*) Tell me I can wipe the writing from that stone! Tell me! (*He seizes the GHOST. A flash of light. The cowed figure collapses into a heap of black garments—gone. A blackout. Music fades.*)

**ACT 2, SCENE 6A**

*(Lights come up on SCROOGE's bedroom. He is kneeling on his bed, clutching the bedpost, wide-eyed with terror.)*

SCROOGE *(babbling)*: I will keep Christmas. The three spirits will live and strive within me. I will wipe the writing off that stone— *(pauses, blinking)* The stone! Where's the stone? *(Feels the bedpost.)* This is my bedpost. *(Touches the covers.)* My bed. *(Looks around.)* My room. *(Jumps out of bed, flailing his arms and legs.)* I'm alive— I'm alive! *(Then— a sudden realization.)* There are no chains! It's all right, it's all true— it all happened, and the shadows of what could have been can be dispelled. They will be! Oh, Jacob Marley— heaven and Christmas be praised! I say it on my knees, old Jacob— *(He kneels, hands raised.)* On my knees! *(A brief moment of true joy. His eyes fill with tears, then he jumps up again.)* I don't know what to do! *(He dances around the stage.)* I'm as light as a feather. I'm as happy as an angel. I'm as merry as a schoolboy. I'm as giddy as a drunken man— *(Stops.)* I feel like laughing out loud! *(Pauses, then faintly.)* Hah. *(Louder.)* Hah-hah! *(Still louder.)* Hah-hah-hah! But I don't know what day it is. I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. I don't know anything— I'm like a baby. Never mind, I don't care, I'd rather be a baby. *(He runs to the window, opens it, and looks out.)* Whoop! Hello! Hello, down there! *(Looks out.)* No fog! No mist! Clear, bracing air! Golden sunlight! Heavenly sky! Merry bells! *(As SCROOGE gazes out, the STREET BOY enters downstage. SCROOGE plays the scene downstage of him, looking out the window into the audience.)*

SCROOGE: You there! Boy! What day is it today?

STREET BOY: What's that?

SCROOGE: What day is it today, my fine fellow?

STREET BOY: Today? Why, Christmas Day!

SCROOGE: *(to himself)* Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The spirits did it all in one night. Of course, why not? They can do anything— *(Notices the boy starting to leave.)* Just a moment!

STREET BOY: Sir?

SCROOGE: Do you know the poultry shop on the next street - the one on the corner?

STREET BOY: I should hope I do, I live 'round here.

SCROOGE: An intelligent boy. A remarkable boy! *(Calling out.)* Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging in the shop? Not the little prize turkey, the big one.

STREET BOY: What? The one as big as me?

SCROOGE: What a delightful boy. It's a pleasure to talk to him. *(Calling out.)* Yes, that one.

STREET BOY: It's hanging there this minute.

SCROOGE: Is it! Go and buy it.

STREET BOY: Come on, sir. Don't pull my leg.

SCROOGE: No, no, I am serious. Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, and I will them directions on where to take it. Come back with the owner, and I'll pay you. Come back in less than five minutes, and I'll pay you triple!

*(The boy lets out a whoop and dashes out. SCROOGE laughs, then darts offstage to change into street clothes. DICKENS moves downstage.)*

*(SCROOGE enters, now dressed in his finest clothes. He heads toward the front door.) He gently puts the lock down as the STREET BOY enters, followed by the SHOPKEEPER, who struggles to carry the enormous turkey.)*

SCROOGE: Oh, is that a turkey! That bird could have never stood on it's legs, that bird. He'd have snapped them off in a second. *(He hands the SHOPKEEPER a paper.)* This is the address for delivery. *(With a great groan, the SHOPKEEPER sets the turkey down to take the paper.)* Here, it's impossible to carry that intotown. You must have a cab! Fetch one, my boy. Fetch one! *(He pays the STREET BOY, who runs off. The SHOPKEEPER groans again, picks up the turkey, and, after receiving extra payment from SCROOGE, runs off as if the turkey suddenly weighs nothing. SCROOGE beams. Music starts.)*

SCROOGE: *(Sees two businesswomen he met the previous day, coming up the street. He eagerly rushes to them, shaking hands with LADIES.)* My dears! How do you do? A Merry Christmas to you and your families!

LADY1: *(Surprised.)* Mr. Scrooge??

SCROOGE: Yes, that's my name. I fear it hasn't been a pleasant one to you. Please, accept my apology, and I'd like to make a donation of— *(He whispers in LADY 1's ear.)*

LADY1: *(Eyes wide.)* Good heavens! Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?  
*(He whispers to LADY 2.)*

SCROOGE: If you please. Not a penny less. I'm including a lot of back payments.

LADY1: Well, I never!

SCROOGE: Say you'll meet me in my office tomorrow, at 10 o'clock sharp. Will you?

LADY2: (*Quickly.*) We will!

SCROOGE: Thank you, thank you. I'm much obliged. God bless you both!  
(*He shakes their hands.*)

LADY1: (*Calling after him.*) Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Ha, ha! Merry Christmas, ladies! Merry Christmas to the world! Ha, ha!

**ACT 2, SCENE 6B**

SCROOGE (*shivering*): (Sees FRED Nephew?)

FRED: Uncle?

SARA: (*fainting*): My smelling salts—

FRED (*catching her*): Bless my soul, is it really you?

SCROOGE: It's I. Your Uncle Scrooge.

FRED: I'm— astonished to see you.

SCROOGE: I don't doubt it. (*Beaming.*) Merry Christmas, Fred. Merry Christmas, Sara my dear.

FRED: Did you say merry—?

SCROOGE: Christmas. Today is that blessed day, is it not?

FRED: Smelling salts! (*SARA laughs.*)

SCROOGE: Does the invitation for dinner still stand?

FRED: Why yes it DOES!

SCROOGE: Then may I join you? Will you let me in?

FRED: Let you in? Of course we'll let you in! (*Takes his coat and hat.*) Merry Christmas, Uncle! The merriest of Christmases!

NARRATOR: He went to church, walked the streets, patted children on the head, talked to beggars, and peered into windows. He found pleasure in everything. He had never imagined that anything— any walk— could bring him so much joy. And then at work the very next day...

(*Lights fade as SCROOGE heads to a house he hadn't entered in years. He asks directions from a WOMAN IN BLACK who points him in the right direction.*)

**ACT 2, SCENE 7**

*(SR - LIGHTS FADE UP as MUSIC FADES DOWN. SCROOGE is seated at his desk. CRATCHIT runs down aisle and stops at the stage steps.)*

CRATCHIT: I'm late. What can I do? What can I say to him?

SCROOGE: *(HE looks at his watch and laughs.)* Bob Cratchit is late. I guess that turkey and the party were too much for him.

CRATCHIT: *(HE addresses the children.)* I'll lose my job! He'll be so angry. I can't go in there. But I have to. *(HE runs up two steps then comes back down the steps.)* I can't.

SCROOGE: Mr. Cratchit! You are late. It is already 18½ minutes after nine.

CRATCHIT: Yes sir. I apologize sir. Somebody sent a surprise turkey. It was delicious and I was up late eating.

SCROOGE: And you couldn't get up for work on time.

CRATCHIT: I am sorry sir. It's only once a year.

SCROOGE: Well then, Mr. Cratchit, you leave me no choice but to... but to... give you a bonus!

CRATCHIT: What?

SCROOGE: Give you a bonus. Are you hard of hearing? *(SCROOGE laughs.)*

CRATCHIT: *(perplexed)* No. No.

SCROOGE: *(SCROOGE laughs and pats CRATCHIT on the back.)* Merry Christmas Bob. A merrier Christmas than I have ever given you for many a year. This afternoon, we will go out for a post-Christmas meal... where we will discuss your raise.

CRATCHIT: *(CRATCHIT puts a hand over his heart. HE looks weak, out of breath.)* My raise?

SCROOGE: Yes. You deserved one a long time ago. I regret I didn't give you one sooner. Next, we will discuss that boy of yours, Tiny Tim, and what needs to be done to make him strong and healthy. Anything I can do for Tim, anything at all, you just let me know.

CRATCHIT: *(hugs SCROOGE)* Yes sir. You are most kind, most... generous.

SCROOGE: *(smiles warmly)* *(SCROOGE puts his arm around CRATCHIT'S shoulder.)* And now, do me a favor, will you? Put some coal on the fire!!



**ACT 2, SCENE 8**

CRATCHIT: Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more. He became as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew!

*(TINY TIM enters, hobbles forward with his crutch.)*

MRS CRATCHIT: And to Tiny Tim— who did NOT die— he was like a second father.  
*(SCROOGE joyfully lifts TINY TIM onto his shoulder.)*

FRED: Some people laughed to see the change in Uncle Scrooge. But he let them laugh, because his own heart laughed and that was enough for him.

LADY1: He had no further dealings with spirits,

LADY 2: and it was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well.

CRATCHIT: May that be said of us all.

MRS. CRATCHIT: And so, as Tiny Tim observed—

TINY TIM: God bless us, every one!