

Scrooge

The Musical
Edited 9/5/2024



Act I/Scene 1

Cheapside. A London street. Christmas Eve.

Church chimes 6 o'clock.

"Opening"

The CURTAIN rises on a tableau of a Dickensian Christmas card - circa 1843 - a crowd of Shoppers, Street Vendors and Children fill the stage and the aisles. A tumbling profusion of Christmas fare fills the street stalls and shops. The tableau comes to life

Solo 1:

"The first Noel, the angels did say"

Solo 2:

"God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay"

Solo 3:

"Good Christian men rejoice, with heart and soul and voice"

Solo 4:

"O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant"

Solo 5:

"Silent night, holy night"

Company Sings:

"Sing a song of gladness and cheer,

For the time of Christmas is here!

Look around about you and see

What a world of wonder this world can be!

Sing a Christmas carol

Sing a Christmas carol

Sing a Christmas carol

Like the children do!

And enjoy the beauty

All the joy and beauty

That a merry Christmas

Can bring to you!

The crowd mingle and wish each other a Merry Christmas

Sing a song of gladness and cheer.

For the time of Christmas is here!

Look around about you and see

What a world of wonder

This world can be!

Sing a Christmas carol

Sing a Christmas carol

Sing a Christmas carol

Like the children do!

And enjoy the beauty

All the joy and beauty
That a merry Christmas
Can bring to you!"

The people begin to disperse, reveling, some out the back doors and some through backstage.

Act I/Scene 2

Scrooge's office

Scrooge is hidden behind a large accounting ledger. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, is sitting at a tall desk in the corner of the dingy room, writing. We hear some Urchins singing off stage in the back of the sanctuary.

Urchins (in strident cacophony)
"Ark the 'erald ayngels si-hing
Glory to the new-born king!
Peace on 'erf – an' mercy mi-hild
Jesus Christ;-'at little child!"

Scrooge slams the ledger shut. Cratchit jumps. Scrooge cocks an ear to the mutilated rendering of "Ark the' Erald Hayngels", mutters angrily to himself. gets up from his desk and stomps towards the door

Scrooge: Infernal horrible caterwauling! Don't they know I'm trying to run a business here!?! (He grabs a thick walking-stick from a hat stand as he passes), Cratchit looks up fleetingly.

Scrooge: Get on with yer work, Cratchit! Bah! Humbug! Insolent young ruffians, coming here with their Christmas nonsense ... bah!

He wags an admonishing finger in Cratchit's face, replaces the stick and returns to his desk. The singing gets louder still. There is a pounding at the door. Scrooge turns round and crosses to the door

Scrooge: Why can't they leave a man in peace! (He grabs his stick and pulls open the door) A charming, elegant and smiling young man stands before him. This is his nephew, Harry

Scrooge: Oh, it's you!

Nephew: Uncle Ebenezer, I cannot tell you what a joy it is to see your happy smiling face! And how are you, Bob?

Bob Cratchit: Very well, thank you, sir.

Scrooge growls his disgust and turns back to his desk. The Nephew follows him jauntily into the office and closes the door. He gives Cratchit a friendly nod and a wink and follows Scrooge to his desk

Nephew: A merry Christmas, Uncle Ebenezer! God save you!

Scrooge: God save me from Christmas! It's a lot of humbug! (He swiftly and expertly counts up a handful of gold sovereigns, drops them into the money-box and slams it shut to underline the sentiment. He picks up the money-box and carries it over to the safe)

Nephew: Christmas a humbug? Come now, I'm sure you don't mean that!

Scrooge: And I'm sure I do mean that! Merry Christmas, indeed! What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough!

Nephew: And what reason have you to be miserable? You're rich enough!

Scrooge: There's no such thing as rich enough! Only poor enough! *(He rams the money-box deep into the safe and slams and locks the door with much clanging of metal)*

Nephew: Don't be so dismal, Uncle Ebenezer!

Scrooge: What else can I be, when I live in a world of fools babbling "Merry Christmas" at one another? What's Christmas but a time for finding yourself a year older and not a day richer? If I could work my will, Nephew, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!

Nephew: God forbid, Uncle!

Scrooge: You keep Christmas in your way, and let me keep it in mine!

Nephew: But you don't keep it!

Scrooge: Then let me leave it alone! And be good enough not to bother me, sir, during business hours.

The Nephew gets up off the desk and looks at his fob watch. Scrooge picks up the heavy ledger and carries it across to a dusty bookcase and locks it away with a key from his watch-chain

Nephew: Seven o'clock on Christmas Eve? That's not business hours! That's drudgery for the sake of it, and an insult to all men of goodwill!

Bob Cratchit: *(muttering under his breath)* Hear, hear!

Nephew: Thank you, Bob Cratchit!

Scrooge: Another word from you, Cratchit, and you'll celebrate Christmas among the great unemployed.

Bob Cratchit Yes, sir. I'm sorry, Mr. Scrooge, sir.

The Nephew pulls a crusty face at his uncle, converting it into an instant smile as Scrooge turns to him

Scrooge: You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into politics - you're fool enough!

Nephew Come now, don't be angry! Dine with my wife and me tomorrow!

Scrooge: There's another thing! As though you hadn't got enough problems, you went and got married! Now why on earth did you do that?

Nephew Because I fell in love with the lady.

Scrooge: *(opening another ledger with a growl)* Love! If there's one thing in the world more nauseating than

"Merry Christmas", it's a happy marriage with some love-sick female! Good-afternoon, sir!

Nephew My offer stands. You are always welcome, Uncle - just like Christmas itself!

Scrooge: I said good-afternoon!

Nephew Merry Christmas, Uncle! And you too, Bob Cratchit! And your family!

Bob Cratchit *(with a smile)* Thank you, sir. And to your good lady!

The Nephew exits, then reappears in a second, popping his head round the door

Nephew Oh, and Uncle!

Scrooge: Hmmm?

Nephew A happy New Year!

Scrooge: Good-afternoon, sir!

The Nephew exits, grinning

Bob Cratchit, considerably cheered up, warms his hands on the candle on his desk. The chimes of a nearby church are heard

Bob Cratchit Excuse me sir, but, it's – er – seven o'clock, sir.

Scrooge looks at his watch

Scrooge: *(grudgingly)* Correct, Cratchit.

Bob Cratchit I don't wish to be impertinent, Mr. Scrooge, but will it be too much trouble if I have my wages, sir?

Scrooge growls his disapproval and reluctantly stops work and takes out his purse, carefully counting out fifteen shillings as they talk. He counts it three times - twice in his own hand, and finally into Cratchit's hand

Scrooge: The trouble with you, Cratchit, is that all you think about is money! You'll be wanting the whole of Christmas Day off tomorrow, I suppose?

Bob Cratchit If it's convenient, sir.

Scrooge: It is not convenient, sir. And it is not fair. And yet if I stopped your wages for it you'd think yourself ill-used, no doubt. Aren't I ill-used when I pay a day's wages for no work?

Bob Cratchit Well, it is Christmas Day, Mr. Scrooge. And it is only once a year, sir.

Scrooge: A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! I don't pay good money for you to be forever on holiday!

Bob Cratchit I appreciate your kindness, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge: That's my weakness - I'm a martyr to me own generosity! I give you one Christmas Day off and you expect 'em all! Very well, take the day. But be here all the earlier next morning!

Bob Cratchit Oh, I will, sir. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. And a merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge: *(thunders)* A merry what!?

Bob Cratchit I mean, I beg your pardon, sir. No offense, sir.

He scuttles quickly out of the door

Scrooge immediately hurries across to blowout the meager candle still burning on Cratchit's desk

Scrooge: *(grumbling to himself)* There's another one. Fifteen shillings a week, a wife and five children, and still talks about a merry Christmas. Belong in a lunatic asylum, the lot of 'em! ... Humbug! *(He obsessively starts to lock, bolt, bar and chain every door, drawer, cupboard and window of his establishment. He takes every possible precaution, even locking the sole remaining piece of coal in the coal-scuttle in his safe)*

Act I/Scene 3

Scene 3a

A London street - Cheapside

Outside in the busy street, a lame boy, Tiny Tim, stands with his sister, Kathy, gazing in awe at the display window of a large toyshop. The center-piece of the window is a magnificent model carousel, revolving to the melody of "A Christmas Carol". Behind the carousel is a glittering Christmas tree, groaning beneath the weight of every conceivable Christmas toy and treat hanging from its branches Bob Cratchit, standing behind the two children, clutching their meager Christmas shopping, points to the window full of toys

Bob Cratchit Well, Kathy, my love, which one do you like best?

Kathy I like that doll in the corner.

Tiny Tim I like all of 'em!

Bob Cratchit Good boy! And why not one in particular?

Tiny Tim Well, you said I can't have any of them, so I might as well like them all!

Bob Cratchit Tiny Tim, you are a philosopher and a gentleman, and I've still got twelve shillings left in my pocket ..

Tiny Tim and Kathy *(together; impressed)* Twelve shillings!

Bob Cratchit Twelve shillings, which says the Cratchit family will have as good a Christmas as the Lord Mayor of London himself!

He kisses the little boy's face and lifts him up onto his shoulder. As they move away from the window, the music starts under.

Tiny Tim *(in awe)* Twelve shillings!

Kathy I do like that doll in the corner!

"Christmas Children"

Bob Cratchit

"Christmas children peep into Christmas windows -
See a world as pretty as a dream."

Kathy

"Christmas trees and toys –"

Tiny Tim

"Christmas hopes and joys –"

Bob Cratchit

“Christmas puddings rich with Christmas cream.”

As they move along the street full of Christmas shoppers, the laden-down luxury of well-to-do shoppers contrasts with the meager purchases of the Cratchits. A well-dressed mother and her two daughters emerge from the toy shop with a mountain of beautifully wrapped parcels, carried by their footman and coach-driver

Bob Cratchit

“Christmas presents shine in the Christmas windows
Christmas boxes tied with pretty bows.”

Kathy

“Wonder what's inside? –”

Tiny Tim

“What delights they hide?”

Bob Cratchit

“But till Christmas morning no-one knows.”

Kathy (*sighing*)

“Won't it be exciting if it snows?”

Tim and Kathy gaze up at an enormous turkey hanging outside the butcher's shop

Tiny Tim/Kathy

“I suppose that children everywhere
Will say a Christmas prayer ...”

Bob Cratchit picks up a somewhat scraggy chicken and pays the butcher

Bob Cratchit

“Till Santa brings their Christmas things...”

Bob Cratchit There, my loves, I've bought the finest bird in the shop ... Well, the finest for one and fourpence!

“Christmas children live in a Christmas daydream -
Waiting for the magic to unfold.”

Tiny Tim

“Wond'rous things to eat-”

Kathy

“Ev'ry Christmas treat-”

Bob Cratchit

“Rich or not, the Christmas pot of gold
Hypnotizes children young and old...”

They move on to the fruit stall.

Bess With your lot to feed, Bob Cratchit, I'd say the apples at six a penny are your best bet. *She puts apples in Bob Cratchit's basket*

Bob Cratchit True, Bess, true *(abd hands her the money)*

Kathy *(To Tiny Tim)* I'd rather have that doll in the corner

Tiny Tim I'd rather have the oranges.

The move to the wine merchant who is serving a wealthy customer.

Wine Merchant *(Handing a bottle to her customer)* Your change Mrs. Carstairs. Eighteen-forty is the best vintage in twenty years.

Mrs. Carstairs At two shillings a bottle, it should be! A happy Christmas to you!

Wine Merchant And a happy Christmas to you, mam! *(Spotting the Cratchits, grabs a meager bottle from the cart)* This here will make the finest quality punch, Mr C, and only twopence a pint.

Bob Cratchit takes the bottle and pays the twopence.

Bob Cratchit *(Smiling at Tim and Kathy)* Christmas punch — a Cratchit specialty.

They move on through the merchants and Bob smiles in satisfaction as he surveys the Christmas Eve scene around him.

Bob Cratchit and Company

“I suppose
That children everywhere
Will say a Christmas prayer
Till Santa brings their Christmas things.
Christmas children hunger for Christmas morning.
Christmas day's a wonder to behold.
Young ones' dreams come true
Not-so-young-ones', too!
I believe that story we've been told
Christmas is for children young and old!”

Scene 3b

*Scrooge enters, consulting his Black Book of Debts. He scowls into toyshop window
Mr. Pringle, the toyshop owner, appears. He surveys Scrooge with cynicism, and points to the Black Book*

Mr. Pringle What's that, Mr. Scrooge? Your Christmas shopping list?

Scrooge Yes, as a matter of fact! Except that everyone on the list is going to give me a present! *(He walks away, sniggering at his private joke. Scornfully)* Dolls, toys, carousels ... Presents? Bah! Waste o' money! Christmas? Humbug!

Beggar Woman Merry Christmas! A penny for the poor?

Scrooge Madam, the financial burdens of my life are already intolerable: pray don't add to them by asking me to pay for yours as well!

The Urchins reappear and spot Scrooge

1st Urchin *(pointing at Scrooge)* Oh look, it's that lovable Father Christmas again!

2nd Urchin Gawd bless his little stone-cold heart!

Scrooge swings full circle at the Urchins with his stick and the Urchins disperse, laughing.

Scrooge, muttering and grumbling, is suddenly aware of a portly gentleman, Jollygoode, standing behind him. He scowls suspiciously as he bows, smiling

Jollygoode Good-evening, sir. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Joseph Jollygoode. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

Scrooge Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years; seven years this very night.

There is an ominous rumble of thunder

Jollygoode I have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

Scrooge *(his eyes narrowing at the offensive word)* Liberality?

Jollygoode Mr. Scrooge, sir, at this festive season of the year, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and the destitute.

Scrooge Excellent. Then I suggest you do so.

Jollygoode You miss my point, sir. The poor suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities.

Scrooge Are there no prisons?

Jollygoode Indeed there are, sir. That's one thing there's no shortage of!

Scrooge And the workhouses? Are they still in operation?

Jollygoode They are, sir, and I wish I could say they were not. A few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat, and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is a time when want is keenly felt, and abundance rejoices. What may we put you down for, sir?

Scrooge Nothing, sir.

Jollygoode You wish to be anonymous?

Scrooge I wish to be left alone, sir - that is what I wish. I don't make myself merry at Christmas, and I cannot afford to make idle people merry. I have been forced to support the establishments I have mentioned through taxation ... and those who are badly off must go there!

Jollygoode Many would rather die than go there!

Scrooge If they would rather die, then they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population! Yes sir, ...decrease the surplus population! Good-night to you.

Jollygoode, deflated and defeated, gives up the struggle and exits

The music starts under - a bright, angry tempo

“I Hate People”

Scrooge

Scavengers and sycophants and flatterers and fools!
Pharisees and parasites and hypocrites and ghouls!
Calculating swindlers! Prevaricating frauds!
Perpetrating goodness as they roam the earth in hordes!
Feeding on their fellow men, reaping rich rewards!
Contaminating everything they see!
Corrupting honest men -
Like me!

He pauses for a moment to steal a handful of roasted chestnuts from the street vendor, then proceeds on his way along the street market, bustling with activity around different stalls selling a dazzling Dickensian variety of hot foods, etc.

Scrooge

I hate people! - I hate people!
People are despicable creatures -
Loathsome, inexplicable creatures -
Good-for-nothing, kickable creatures -

I hate people ...
I abhor them!
When I see the indolent classes
Gulping ale from indolent glasses –
Sitting by while fortune passes
I hate people ...
I detest them -
I deplore them!

He intercepts an elderly lady, Mrs. Dilber, owner of a knitwear stall

Mrs. Dilber (*fearfully*) Oh - it's Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge Two pounds five shillings.

Mrs. Dilber Mr. Scrooge, sir, we've been giving more credit than usual.

Scrooge So have I. Two pounds five shillings!

Mrs. Dilber As it's Christmas, sir, we've given people an extra week or two to pay ...

Scrooge Aha! Then I shall give you an extra week to pay!

Mrs. Dilber (*incredulously*) Oh, thank you, sir ...

Scrooge Which will cost you a further twelve shillings!

Mrs. Dilber Twelve shillings!

Scrooge Unless you would prefer me to confiscate your stall and its contents ... which is my legal right ...

Mrs. Dilber No sir, we'll pay, sir.

Bissett, the Butcher, passes by, carrying a giant turkey

Scrooge Bissett!

Bissett Please, Mr. Scrooge, a few more days.

Scrooge You've already had a few more days! If you can afford to stock turkeys like that, you can afford to pay me!

The Butcher is resigned to the inevitable outcome

Bissett Yes, Mr. Scrooge. Thank you, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge (*satisfied, smugly*)
Fools who have no money spend it -
Get in debt, then try to end it!
Beg me on their knees befriend them -
Knowing I have cash to lend them!
Soft-hearted me! Hard-working me -
Clean-living, thrifty and kind as can be!
Situations like this are of "interest" to me!

Music continues lightly underneath. Scrooge spots another debtor, a street performer with their puppets.

Scrooge You owe me two pounds, seven and six!

Judy Not now, Mr Scrooge - please! I'm performing!

Scrooge (*Surveying the audience of urchins and children*) Pity it doesn't pay you better! Where's my money?

Judy Tomorrow, for sure, Mr. Scrooge . . . it's my best day of the year!

Scrooge Tomorrow it will be two pounds ten . . . or your puppets belong to me.

The children boo him. Scrooge scowls at them.

Judy (*To the children*) That's the meanest man I have ever known.

Scrooge consults his black book and approaches the last stall run by a very personable individual.

Tom Jenkins (*to a customer*) There we are, sir, thank you very much. (*spotting Scrooge approaching*) Merry Christmas to you, sir. Hot broth, Mr. Scrooge ... a small token of Christmas esteem, with the compliments of Tom Jenkins!

Scrooge No!

Tom Jenkins (*hastily*) And there'll be a free can of broth every night throughout the coming year, sir, in gratitude for your infinite kindness in giving me another two weeks to pay!

Scrooge One week.

Tom Jenkins Ten days.

Scrooge One week.

Tom Jenkins One week. *(Tom Jenkins starts to put the broth away)*

Scrooge And put a lid on that stuff -I'll take it home.

Tom Jenkins does as he is bid.

Scrooge
I hate Christmas
I hate people!
Yuletide loving, second-rate people
Nasty little cretinous wretches
Earning what their sweatiness fetches
Empty minds whose pettiness stretches
Further than I can see
Little wonder
I hate people,
And I don't care if they hate me

Scrooge spies another debtor. Pringle the Toyshop Owner

Scrooge Pringle!

Pringle Mr. Scrooge, sir!

Scrooge A word.

Scene 3c

Pringle reluctantly opens the door of his shop and the two enter in to conduct their business in private.

Urchins *(sarcastically)* There 'e goes! – Farver Christmas himself! *(Tom Jenkins nods in agreement)*

As Tom sings, other Tradespersons, victims of Scrooge's "Christmas Spirit" gather round the soup trolley to swap opinions. The number has a dark and threatening feel

"Father Christmas"
Tom Jenkins
Father Christmas - Father Christmas
He's the meanest man
In the whole wide world!
In the whole wide world!
You can feel it!

Mrs. Dibler

He's a miser!

Urchins

He's a skinflint!

Tom Jenkins

He's a stingy lout!

Leave yer stocking out

For yer Christmas gift

And he'll steal it!

All

It's a shame!

He's a villain!

What a game

For a villain to play ...

On Christmas Day!

After Christmas,

Father Christmas

Will be just as mean

As he's ever been ...

And I'm here to say

We should all send Father Christmas ...

On his merry Christmas way!

Another group of dissatisfied Traders have collected. The song builds into a full company production number, in which the People of Cheapside join Tom Jenkins and the Urchins in venting their spleen on the villainous and miserly Scrooge

Tom Jenkins/Beggar Woman

He's a rascal!

Women/Fruit seller/Urchins

He's a bandit!

Company

He's a mean old bean

As we all have seen ..

And I'm here to say

We should all send Father Christmas On his merry Christmas way --

They are cut off in mid flow by Scrooge who enters from the Toy Shop, gleefully scribbling a sizeable addition to his accounts. He is followed by a grim-faced Mr. Pringle

Pringle And a merry Christmas to you, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge peruses the Toy Shop window with scorn

Scrooge Dolls, toys, carousels ... ! Waste of money ... Christmas ... ! Humbug ... !

Scrooge whirls with his stick at the Crowd and they flinch and begin to disperse. Scrooge enters his office.

Company

He's a rascal!

He's a bandit!

He's a mean old bean

As we all have seen ..

And I'm here to say

We should all send Father Christmas On his merry Christmas way!

Scrooge (*Scrooge opens his doors and sticks his head out*) It's because they all hate me! Humbug!
(*Scrooge slams the door with himself inside the office*)

Act I/Scene 4

Scrooge's lodgings. Thoroughly disgruntled, Scrooge opens the door to his bedroom and fumbles with his belongings.

Marley's voice *(A deep voice from the back of the sanctuary/theater)* Scroo-oo-oo-ooge! ...

Scrooge *(transfixed with terror)* Marley? . . . Bah ... Humbug!

Act I/Scene 5

He sets down the soup on a table, takes off his coat and hangs it and his high hat on a hook by his bed. Scrooge picks up a candle-holder from a table near the bed and nervously lights the candle. The flickering flame casts macabre and eerie shadows on the walls. Scrooge freezes again, candle and soup-can poised, as the bizarre sound of the wind gathering strength reaches his ears. The wind howls around him, and a ghostly voice seems to call through it:

Marley's voice *(From backstage right)* Scroo-oo-oo-ooge ...

Scrooge *(Stops in his tracks gulping)* Humb-b-bug! It's not possible! Not possible!

Marley's voice *(From backstage left)* Scroo-o-ooge!

Scrooge stands transfixed with terror as the volume of sound accumulates. Scrooge sets down the soup-can and candle and goes over to check the latch on his door, then leans against it, breathing heavily, listening to the howling wind then briskly returns to his chair.

Marley's voice *(From the back of the sanctuary/theater)* Scroo-o-ooge!

Scrooge sinks deeper into his chair in fear. A mournful wind moans in the chimney, and Scrooge remains ill-at-ease. He pulls the armchair close to the hearth, opens the gruel from Tom Jenkins's soup-can and settles in his chair to try and enjoy it. He begins to take a spoonful. As he raises the first spoonful to his lips, his hand starts to shake uncontrollably, slopping the gruel back into the can. The wind moans mournfully in the chimney and seems to echo his name. Smoke suddenly billows out.

Marley's voice Scroo-oo-o-ooge!

Scrooge *(resolutely)* It's humbug still! I'll not believe it!

Marley's voice Scroo-oo-o-ooge!

He stares wild-eyed at a bell beside the fireplace in front of him as it lowly starts to swing. At first it scarcely makes a sound. Then it gathers strength, swinging wildly back and forth. The sound of other

bells fills the night with unaccustomed sounds. Scrooge puts down his bowl of gruel and clasps his hands over his ears as the bells reach a deafening crescendo. Suddenly there is total silence. Scrooge's eyes dart suspiciously from side to side. He takes his hands from his ears and listens intently. A deep hollow clanking sound and heavy footsteps are audible outside his door. Scrooge rushes to the door and puts his ear to it. Reverberating echoes of dragging chains and creaking doors and dismal wailing and muffled footsteps are intermingled and orchestrated into a mounting nightmare of sound. Scrooge double-checks the locks on the door and hurries back to his chair, looking round the edge of it in unconscionable distress. He takes a cashbox hidden by the fireplace and puts it under his pillow.

Marley *(wailing)* Scroo-o-ooge!

Marley shadow appears suddenly in the window. Scrooge yells, and shuts the drapes.

Scrooge It's all humbug!

Thunder peals and lightning flashes. Marley seems to appear out of nothing!

Marley Ebenezer Scrooge!

Scrooge whirls round with a cry of terror. Marley is swathed in a great chain made up of cash-boxes, ledgers, keys, padlocks, deeds and heavy purses. Scrooge contemplates in horror this fearful reincarnation of his former partner.

Marley Ebenezer Scrooge!

Scrooge H-how now! What do you want with me?

Marley Much!

Scrooge Who are you?

Marley Better to ask me who I was.

Scrooge Who were you, then?

Marley In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

Scrooge walks slowly around him, examining him intently and with some surprise at this unlikely trick

Marley You don't believe in me, do you?

Scrooge No, I don't.

Marley Why do you doubt what you see?

Scrooge Because I've had a slight stomach disorder. It has undoubtedly affected my vision. You're a hallucination, probably brought on by an undigested bit of beef, or a blob of mustard, or an old potato. Yes, that's what you are - you're an old potato!

Marley I tell you, Scrooge, there's more of the grave than of gravy about me!

Scrooge You do not exist, Jacob Marley! Humbug, I tell you - humbug!

Marley Humbug - eh!? *(He raises his arms in the air with an agonized cry, shaking his chain and making an appalling noise)*

Marley Now do you believe in me?

Scrooge I believe in you! Absolutely! And now good-night ... *He shows Marley the door, which he opens, but which Marley closes simply with a breath.*

Scrooge But why do you walk the earth? And why do you come to me?

Marley I am doomed to wander through the world and witness what I cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness.

Again Marley utters a deep moan and shakes his chain, as though overwhelmed with remorse. Scrooge trembles.

Scrooge And why are you fettered by that great chain?

Marley I wear the chain that I forged during my life on earth. I made it link by link and yard by yard, and now I can never be rid of it. Any more than you will ever be rid of yours.

Scrooge *(trembling)* M-m-mine?

Marley Imagine the weight and length of the mighty chain you are making for yourself. It was as heavy and as long as this seven Christmases ago! You have labored at it mightily ever since! It's a terrible ponderous chain you are making, Scrooge.

Scrooge instinctively looks about his person for the chain and is relieved to find it not there.

Marley When I lived, my spirit, like yours, never walked beyond the narrow limits of our counting-house.

Scrooge But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

Marley Mankind is our business, Ebenezer. But how seldom do we attend to it! I know this because I have sat invisible at your elbow many and many a day in your office.

Scrooge *(shivers at the thought)* My office?

Marley Hear me, my time is almost gone. I am here tonight to warn you. It is your only hope.

Scrooge *(leaping to his feet)* For pity's sake, Marley, leave me in peace!

Marley It was for pity's sake that I came here. Pity for you! I leave you now with just the tiniest chance of escaping my fate!

Scrooge looks slightly cheerful for the first time since he met the apparition.

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

Marley You will be visited by three spirits.

Scrooge I - I think I'd rather not.

Marley The first will appear tonight when the bell tolls one.

Scrooge Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and get it over with, Jacob?

Marley The second at two o'clock, and the third when the bell tolls three.

In the distance, midnight strikes.

Marley I must go now, for I am doomed to wander through the world in everlasting repentance.

Scrooge Marley, wait!

Marley Look to see me only once more, and, for your own sake, remember what has passed between us! Farewell, Ebenezer Scrooge!

He raises his arm high above his head, lightning strikes and thunder roars and Marley disappears from view. Scrooge looks around the empty room. He grabs his candle and raises it to look around the room. Both he and the candle are shaking as he carries it nervously around the room.

Scrooge Three ghosts...? Bah! Three humbugs!

Scrooge sits in his armchair and covers up with a blanket. Blackout.

Act I/Scene 6

Underscore, something eerie, about 15-20 seconds. The clock lights up and is shown to advance from midnight to 1 o'clock. Lights up as the clock strikes one.

Scrooge *(waking up a bit startled)* One o'clock! *(Scrooge sits up and scans the room intently)*
And...nothing?

A blinding light fills the room. The Ghost of Christmas Past appears from within the light. Scrooge curls up in his chair and hides behind the blanket but peeking out staring at the unexpected figure that confronts him.

Scrooge *(Nervously)* Who are you?

Christmas Past I am the Spirit who's coming was foretold to you.

Scrooge *(Calmed by her kind voice)* You don't ... look like a ghost.

Christmas Past Why, thank you! *(She curtsies)* You DO look like a bitter old miser.

Scrooge May I enquire more precisely who or what you are?

Christmas Past I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Scrooge Long past?

Christmas Past No. Your past. I am the ghost of all the loved ones you have lost.

Scrooge And what business brings you here?

Christmas Past *(she gently begins to remove Scrooge's blanket)* Your welfare, you silly old goat.

Scrooge *(slaps her hands away)* To be woken by a ghost at one o'clock in the morning is hardly conducive to my welfare.

Christmas Past Your redemption, then.

Scrooge gasps with fear and recoils as the Ghost reaches out and grabs his arm

Christmas Past Come—walk with me!

Scrooge protests as the vice-like grip of the Ghost removes him gently but firmly from his chair. But there is no resisting the Ghost.

Scrooge Where are we going?

Christmas Past We are going to look at your childhood.

Act I/Scene 7

A school-room center stage. During this scene the toy store storefront is rolled backwards. The classroom is sparsely furnished with some meager school benches.

“A Christmas Carol”

Children

“Sing a song of gladness and cheer,
For the time of Christmas is here!
Look around about you and see
What a world of wonder this world can be!
And enjoy the beauty
All the joy and beauty
That a merry Christmas
Can bring to you!”

Teacher Merry Christmas, children!

Children Merry Christmas, Mrs. Bleak!

The children begin to disperse, grabbing their belongings and leaving the classroom. One small boy (Ebby) retreats out of sight and away from the exiting children and curls up at the end of a school bench. Another child, before exiting, gives the teacher a small package and a hug. The teacher exits in the opposite direction as the kids. The lonely boy curls up even more to shield himself from the cold, looks over his shoulder at the empty room and proceeds to wipe tears from his eyes with his forearms.

Christmas Past Look. This school is not quite empty, is it? A solitary boy, neglected by his family, is left there still.

Scrooge sees his forgotten self as he used to be, and blows his nose and wipes tears from his eyes in a similar fashion as the young boy.

Scrooge *(Somewhat pensive and to himself)* Poor little fellow! Poor little me! *(To the Ghost)* An attractive child, wasn't I? ... But I could never join in those Christmas things ... I wish ...

Christmas Past What is it?

Scrooge Nothing. Nothing.

Christmas Past What do you wish?

Scrooge There were some children singing a Christmas carol at my door. I should like to have given them something, that's all.

He looks sadly at his former self. The Ghost of Christmas Past smiles at him.

Christmas Past But this Christmas was special.

Jen, Scrooge's sister, runs in the classroom and looks around to try and find the lone boy. Once she sees him, she runs over, sits down next to him and tries to embrace the little boy fondly.

Scrooge Oh look, it's my little sister. *(He calls out and waves)* Jenny! ... Jen! *(To the Ghost)* Why doesn't she wave back?

Christmas Past She cannot see or hear you. These are but the shadows of the things that have been.

Jen Ebby, dear, dear brother, I have come to bring you home!

Ebby Shakes head NO and turns away.

Jen Father is so much kinder than he used to be. He sent me in a coach to bring you home, Ebby. We'll be together all Christmas long. Collect your things.

Ebenezer, wipes his nose, reluctantly goes and picks up his few meager possessions, and follows his sister off.

Christmas Past *(watching them)* Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. But she had a large heart.

Scrooge So she had, I'll not deny it.

Christmas Past She died a young woman, and had, I believe, children.

Scrooge One child.

Christmas Past Ah yes ... your nephew! Harry ...

Scrooge *(a bit uneasy)* Yes ... My nephew ...

Christmas Past *(looking into the distance; pointing)* Now here's a Christmas you really enjoyed!

Act I/Scene 8

Scene 8a

Fezziwig's warehouse

Lights come up showing Scrooge's counting house now Fezziwig's office. Two young men, Ebenezer & Dick, sit at the desks. Fezziwig enters from stage left.

Fezziwig *(Entering the room and pats the young men on the back)* Ebenezer! Dick!

Scrooge *(amazed)* It's old Fezziwig! I was his apprentice!

The two young men come down from their desks and approach Fezziwig.

Fezziwig Yo-ho, Ebenezer! Yo-ho, Dick! No more work today, my boys! Hilli-ho! Chirrup! It's Christmas Eve! Now come along, put all your work away before a man can say Jack Robinson before Mrs. Fezziwig and my daughter arrive with the punch bowl.

Ebenezer and Dick leap into action. Scrooge nudges the Ghost.

Scrooge My word, I am a good-looking chap! And that other fellow! Dick Wilkins, was his name. He was the best friend I ever had.

Fezziwig scuttles up and down as the warehouse is transformed in an instant from a place of business to a party setting. Balloons and multi-coloured twists of ribbon are festooned around the warehouse signs. The equally jolly Mrs. Fezziwig approaches at the head of a Christmas party procession bearing all manner of delicious burdens. She erupts into the room. She has brought the entire party with her-food, drink, decorations and music, and other party guests, laden with packages. Everybody carries something. A very pretty young girl, Isabel, walks smilingly alongside Mrs. Fezziwig, carrying a beautifully decorated, multi-tiered Christmas cake. Fezziwig greets his wife and daughter with a kiss.

Ebenezer *(nudging Dick Wilkins; indicating the girl)* That's Isabel, old Fezziwig's daughter. Isn't she wonderful? *(He sighs dreamily)*

Dick Wilkins *(grinning at him)* You've got about as much chance of getting close to her as I have ...

Isabel trips. The multi-tiered cake teeters alarmingly. Both are about to fall. In a flash Ebenezer is beside her. He puts his arm around her waist to steady her, and with the other he steadies the cake. Everybody cheers!

Fezziwig Well done, Ebenezer!

Isabel *(Isabel dazzles him with a grateful and flirtatious smile)* Thank you, Ebenezer. *(She places the cake on the table with all the other party fixin's)*

Dick Wilkins (*nudging Ebenezer*) Well, I stand corrected! (*Pointing at Isabel*) You are a fast worker!

The merriment redoubles as the embarrassed Ebenezer grins and shrugs awkwardly. Fezziwig holds up his hand for silence.

Fezziwig Mrs. Fezziwig, my darling Isabel, my dear friends, thanks to our heroic Ebenezer there will now be happiness and contentment in this room, the likes of which none of us has ever seen before!

Mrs. Fezziwig (*beaming*) Consumption of fewer than six cakes and three beakers of punch per person will be penalized by instant dismissal from the party!

Everybody cheers

Fezziwig Splendid! Begin!

The music starts playing. and to a roar of approval from the Company, old Fezziwig launches into the opening song and dance of the party with his lady

“December the Twenty-Fifth”

Fezziwig

“Of all the days

In all the year

That I'm familiar with -

There's only one

That's really fun”

Chorus

“December the twenty-fifth!”

Fezziwig

“Correct!”

Mrs. Fezziwig

“Ask anyone called Robinson

Or Brown or Jones or Smith

Their favorite day

And they will say –”

Chorus

“December the twenty-fifth!”

Mrs. Fezziwig

“Correct!”

Chorus

“December the twenty-fifth, me dears.

December the twenty-fifth.

The dearest day in all the year -

December the twenty-fifth!

Mr. and Mrs Fezziwig

“Correct!”

Scrooge, lost in reverie, taps his toe in time to the music. Young Ebenezer, a bit uncomfortable, makes his way to the opposite side of the room, trying to avoid running into the dancers and singers. Christmas past points across the room to the lone figure of the young Ebenezer who is mildly watching the dance over his shoulder.

Christmas Past (to Scrooge) And why didn't you join in?

Scrooge (embarrassed, he stops his reverie and stops tapping his toe) ... Because I couldn't dance.

Christmas past encourages Scrooge to join in with the dancing.

Fezziwig

“At times we're glad
To see the back
Of all our kin and kith”

Mrs. Fezziwig

“But there's a date
We celebrate-”

Chorus

December the twenty-fifth!

Mr. and Mrs Fezziwig

“Correct!”

Mrs. Fezziwig

“At times our friends
May seem to be
Devoid of wit and pith –”

Fezziwig

“But all of us
Are humorous –”

Chorus

December the twenty-fifth!

Mr. and Mrs Fezziwig

“Correct!”

Chorus

“December the twenty-fifth, me dears.

December the twenty-fifth.

The dearest day in all the year -

December the twenty-fifth!”

“December the twenty-fifth, me dears.

December the twenty-fifth.

The dearest day in all the year -

December the twenty-fifth!”

Mrs. Fezziwig “

If there's a day in history
That's more than any myth -
Beyond a doubt
One day stands out –”

Chorus

“December the twenty-fifth!”

Mr. and Mrs Fezziwig

“Correct!”

Mr. and Mrs Fezziwig

“I don't hear any arguments,”

Fezziwig

“So may I say forthwith
I wish that every day could be
December the twenty-fifth!”

Chorus

“Correct!”

Just as Scrooge begins to get the hang of the dance, the Ghost pulls him out. The dance continues against the dialogue. The music continues and the warehouse is now a whirl of dancing figures.

Chorus

“December the twenty-fifth, me dears.
December the twenty-fifth.
The dearest day in all the year -
December the twenty-fifth, me dears.
December the twenty-fifth, me dears.
December the twenty-fifth, me dears.
December the twenty-fifth!”

Scrooge What a marvelous man!

Christmas Past He has merely spent a few pounds of your mortal money - three or four, perhaps. What is that to be deserving of so much praise?

Scrooge (*looking at her disapprovingly*) You don't understand. He had the power to render us happy or unhappy - to make our work a pleasure or a burden. It's nothing to do with money! ... nothing to do with money!

Christmas past looks at him intently emphasizing the obvious dichotomy of his statements. He sees the Ghost looking at him knowingly and Scrooge looks away in disappointment.

Christmas Past What's the matter?

Scrooge Nothing.

Christmas Past Something, I think.

Scrooge Oh, I was just thinking about Bob Cratchit.

Christmas Past Who's Bob Cratchit?

Scrooge (*hastily*) No-one.

He dismisses the matter and returns his attention to the festivities around him. The music of "December the Twenty-fifth" has now dissolved into No. 10, and the party goes on to exit. Isabel pauses in the midst of her clean up duties and begins watching the young Ebenezer. Scrooge catches her glance and cannot take his eyes from her. Isabel walks over to Ebenezer, inviting him to dance. Ebenezer's shyness borders on panic, but with a warm and reassuring smile she gently coaxes him onto the floor. He is gauche and uncoordinated, but Isabel nods her encouragement

Scene 8b

The other dancers slowly disappear from view taking props & set pieces with them, until Isabel and Ebenezer are dancing alone downstage

Scrooge (*Whispering*) Isabel ... (*To Christmas Past*) Ah, those were wonderful days, you know.

Young Ebenezer: Some would say that happiness cannot be seen, it cannot be touched.

Isabel: I can see and touch happiness when I look at you and dance with you (*Isabel twirls*) or hold your hand (*Isabel grabs Ebenezer's hand and they sit*).

Scrooge: She adored me. I can't say I blame her.

Isabel: I can see and feel happiness when I look to the horizon from the top of a hill, when I climb to the top of a tall tree and enjoy the view.

Scrooge: Happiness is the folly of fools and I am one of those fools.

Ebenezer: I find happiness when I see you walking toward me and when we share a day together.

ALL: Happiness can be whatever you want it to be.

Christmas Past: Yes, happiness can be whatever you want it to be

Scrooge: She was so sweet and kind.

Christmas Past: Yes, she was. She still is. Adored by her family, her children, her grandchildren. You missed it all, Scrooge. Why?

Ebenezer: *(Standing up and still holding her hand)* Isabel, are you happy? Do I make you happy?

Isabel: Well yes! And do I make you happy?

Ebenezer take's Isabel's hand and kisses it then takes a knee and get's a ring from his pocket and shows it to Isabel. Isabel, with excitement shakes her head yes and Ebenezer places the ring on her finger. Ebenezer stands, lovingly grasps Isabel's hand and brings her hand to the crook of his arm and, visibly happy, they exit.

Scrooge She was so sweet and kind.

Christmas Past Yes, she was. She still is. Adored by her family, her children, her grandchildren. You missed it all, Scrooge. Why?

Scrooge *(Longingly but with regret)* I truly did love her, you know.

Christmas Past Then why did you let her go?

Scrooge smiles in sad bewilderment.

Scrooge *(guiltily)* I didn't.

Christmas Past Really?

Scrooge She left me.

Christmas Past I don't think that is the full story. Come. Our time grows short.

Act I/Scene 9

Scene 9a

Scrooge's office

A more mature-looking Ebenezer is engrossed in work at his desk as Isabel enters, carrying a bunch of flowers.

Isabel Ebenezer?

Ebenezer Yes. *(He does not look up from his work)*

Isabel picks out the fading flowers from the vase on Ebenezer's desk and replaces them with the fresh ones. Old Scrooge is right beside her, and now looks at her with a sadness greater than her own

Isabel I have come to say goodbye.

Ebenezer is preoccupied.

Isabel I am going away, Ebenezer – you will not see me again.

Slowly Ebenezer looks up at Isabel as her words penetrate.

Ebenezer But you are going to marry me!

Isabel shakes her head. She looks sadly at the ring Ebenezer gave her.

Isabel No. You have found another love to replace me - and she is much more desirable than I am.

Ebenezer I have no idea what you're talking about.

Isabel puts her hand in the open money-box on the desk and lets a handful of golden sovereigns trickle through her fingers.

Isabel This lady here.

Ebenezer puts his pen down and looks at the gold, and then at Isabel

Ebenezer How shall I ever understand this world? There is nothing on it which is so hard as poverty, and there is nothing it condemns with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

Scrooge He's right! It was true then and it's true now!

Isabel You fear the world too much Ebenezer. All your nobler dreams, that I loved, I have seen die off, one by one, until only the desire for gain is left.

Ebenezer I am not changed towards you ... am I?

Isabel Yes, Ebenezer. You are. Your promise to me was made when you were poor, and content to be so. You were someone else then. I see that only too clearly, and so I can release you.

She looks sadly again at the ring, then removes it from her finger and offers it to Ebenezer. He does not take it.

Ebenezer Have I ever asked to be released?

Isabel In words, no. But in a changed nature, yes. In everything that made my love of value to you, yes. If you met me today, you would not love me.

Scrooge (*Vehemently to Isabel*) I would! (*Pause and then towards Christmas Past*) I do!

Christmas Past Ssssh! (*she puts her hand over Scrooge's mouth*) I'm trying to listen!

Scrooge (*Muffled to himself*) I still do...

Ebenezer remains silent. Isabel touches the pair of scales on the desk, placing the little ring on one side, and a pile of gold coins on the other. The scale moves accordingly

Ebenezer Isabel, I find it impossible to discuss personal affairs during business hours. Now please.

Isabel You see? If you weigh me by gain, I weigh very little. And so I am not enough for you, and I release you - with a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

Scrooge smashes his fist silently on the desk. Ebenezer goes to speak, but Isabel turns away, not realizing. Scrooge punches Ebenezer in the arm.

Scrooge Say something, you fool! Say something!

Ebenezer struggles to say something

Isabel You may have pain in this. But it will pass, and you will dismiss the recollection of it gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke.

Ebenezer shakes his head. Isabel kisses his cheek

Scrooge Don't go ... It's a mistake ... don't go!

Isabel Be happy in the life you have chosen.

Scrooge Isabel!

Ebenezer *Stands and takes a step toward the door where Isabel exited*) Isabel ...

Scrooge and Ebenezer Isabel ...

Scene 9b

But she has gone. Scrooge looks brokenly at Ebenezer.

Scrooge Go after her!

Ebenezer turns his back and walks away

Scrooge *(To Ebenezer)* You fool! *(To himself)* You fool!

Ebenezer returns to his desk and his work. Scrooge remains looking out after the lost Isabel. Ebenezer removes the gold coins from the scale. The ring weighs down the other side of the scale. Ebenezer picks up the ring and looks at it sadly. Scrooge looks at the same ring, which he still wears, on a string around his neck.

Scrooge Spirit, remove me from this place, I can bear it no more.

Christmas Past and Scrooge return to his bedroom. The clock now reads 2 o'clock.

Christmas Past I have brought you home. *(after a slight pause)* Have you have any family left?

Scrooge Yes, my nephew Harry.

Christmas Past Do you love him?

Scrooge Well, I try, but it's difficult.

Christmas Past I know! I have seen it! The truth is, he is my son.

Scrooge Jenny? . . . Is that you?

Christmas Past Yes! My time here was short and my time now is short. I left you once and sadly, I will have to leave you again. Ebby, there's no coming back which is why you must never hide your love from those you cherish.

“Love While You Can”

Christmas Past

Christmas Past You must tell them while you have them what they mean to you - how precious they are to you.

Christmas Past begins to exit

Christmas Past Goodbye, Ebby! My dear, dear brother . . . I pray you will remember me.

Scrooge (*Desperate*) Jenny, I . . . No . . . Please don't leave me again! . . . I love you, Jennie, I love you!

Christmas Past steps away and moves into the darkness and disappears.

Scrooge Then go . . . but haunt me no longer!

Blackout

Act I/Scene 10

Scrooge's room

The clock strikes two o'clock. Scrooge pokes his head out from behind the bed curtains, his eyes darting from side to side in terror. A strange glow of light pervades the darkened room. Scrooge mutters to himself.

Scrooge Two o'clock! ... "The first at one, the second at two!" I'm ready for you, whatever you are!

The silence is overwhelming

Scrooge (*Trembling; terrified*) There's nothing to be afraid of!

The room is still and silent, but the glow of light is stronger. Scrooge walks slowly across the room. A deep, disembodied voice booms eerily through the house

Christmas Present (*off*) Ebenezer Scrooge! Come here, Scrooge! I'm waiting for you!

Scrooge (*Scrooge cowers in a corner his eyes shut tight*) Is that-er- you again, Jacob Marley, m-my old friend?

Christmas Present (*thundering*) No, it's not!

Scrooge Heaven have mercy on me!

The glow of light intensifies. Scrooge, still whimpering, shields his face as deep menacing music builds to a climax and then stops. Scrooge opens his eyes - and to what a sight! The light softens. Enthroned amidst this glorious setting sits a superb and jolly Giant, wearing a magnificent deep green velvet robe bordered with ermine, and on his head a holly wreath, set with icicles that sparkle like outsize diamonds

Scrooge Who are you?

Christmas Present I am the Spirit of Christmas Present! Look upon me! You have never seen the likes of me before!

Scrooge Never.

Christmas Present And yet how many of my siblings have you rejected in your miserable lifetime?

Scrooge I have never met your siblings.

Christmas Present You have never looked for them!

Scrooge (*suspiciously*) And what do you want with me?

Christmas Present You're a funny-looking little creature! I must admit I found it hard to believe that you would be as horrible as my siblings said you'd be, but now that I look at you I can see they were understating the truth!

Scrooge *(with dignity)* Let me assure you, that I am a man of the highest principles and the most generous spirit!

Christmas Present Generous spirit! Ha! You don't know the meaning of the phrase - but you are about to find out! Drink this!

Christmas Present pours some white fluid into two huge chalices and hands one to Scrooge

Scrooge What is it?

Christmas Present Taste it!

Cautiously Scrooge sniffs at the drink, then sips it. He pauses, then drains the chalice dry. The Ghost nods and smiles.

Christmas Present Do you like it?

Scrooge It's wonderful! I've never tasted anything like it!

Christmas Present Of course you haven't!

Scrooge What is it?

Christmas Present The milk of human kindness. There are more good things in life, Scrooge, than you can possibly imagine!

"I Like Life"

Christmas Present *(The Giant says in a booming voice)*

Ebenezer Scrooge

The sins of man are huge.

A never-ending symphony

Of villainy and infamy,

Duplicity, deceit and subterfuge.

And no-one's worse than Ebenezer Scrooge!

Though man's a handy candidate for hell,

I must admit

Life sometimes has

Its brighter side as well!

I like life! Life likes me!

Life and I fairly fully agree -

Life is fine! Life is good!
'Specially mine,
Which is just as it should be!"

Christmas Present tops up Scrooge's goblet every time Scrooge takes a drink, which is frequently.

I like encouraging the kind,
And why not?
Life's a pleasure
That I deny not!
I like life! Here and now!
Life and I made a mutual vow.
Till I die,
Life and I
We'll both try to be better somehow!
And if life were a woman,
She would be my wife!

Scrooge

"Why?"

Christmas Present

Why?

Because I like life!

Scrooge That's all very well for you! I hate life!

The Ghost roars with laughter and pours Scrooge another immense goblet of the milk of human kindness. Scrooge suddenly becomes morose and depressed.

Christmas Present Nonsense, man. Why?

Scrooge Because life hates me! That's why!

Christmas Present Scrooge, you're an even bigger fool than I took you for! You've had over sixty years on this earth in your long, miserable, selfish existence, and you still don't even know how to live! Now listen to me.

"I like life" ... well, go on.

Scrooge

(singing reluctantly) "I like life..."

As he sings, Christmas Present lavishes drink on Scrooge, who mellows visibly and gradually emerges from his gloom.

Christmas Present That's better.

"Life likes me!"

Scrooge

"Life ... *(gulps)* ... likes me ..."

Christmas Present

Good, good.

“I make life a perpetual spree!”

Scrooge

Perpetual spree!

Christmas Present

“Eating food!”

Scrooge

“Being kind”

Christmas Present

“Thinking who'd

Like the privilege to dine me!”

Scrooge

“I like living the life of pleasure”

Christmas Present That's better, Scrooge, and ...

“Pausing only to take my leisure!

I like songs! I like dance!

I hear music and I'm in a trance!”

Scrooge

“Tra-la-la!”

Christmas Present

“Oom-pa-pah!”

Both

“Chances are I shall get up and prance!”

Christmas Present

“Where there's music and laughter,

Happiness is rife!”

Scrooge

“Why?”

Christmas Present

“Why?

Because I like life!

Christmas Present and Scrooge

“Where there's music and laughter,

Happiness is rife!”

“Why?”

“Why?

Because we like life!

The music builds as the Giant raises their arms to heaven in a majestic gesture. Blackout.

END OF ACT I

ACT 2

Entr'acte Music: I Like Life (Variation)

Chorus
"Christmas Carol"

Act II/Scene 1

Just outside of the Cratchit house.

Tiny Tim I wish it was Christmas every day of the year!

Bob Cratchit Well, if it was, what would you do for Christmas?

Tiny Tim We'd have to think of somethin' else.

Kathy *(with spirit)* Not this year, you don't! We're goin' carol-singin'! And anyway, I like Christmas just the way it is! Come on, Tim.

She takes Tiny Tim's hand and they exit

Bob Cratchit *(calling after them)* You have to learn to take the good with the bad, Tiny Tim! Don't be late back!

The set changes to reveal the kitchen-parlor of the Cratchits' house. Bob enters the parlor as Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Present are just "outside" the kitchen window.

Scrooge What am I doing in the middle here, and in my night clothes?

Christmas Present Come. I want you to see the world as it really is.

Scrooge Who lives in this miserable hovel?

Christmas Present Behold the lavish abode of Robert Cratchit, Esquire.

Scrooge *(lamely)* Looks quite nice, really ... for an office-clerk ... Can I look inside?

Christmas Present It will cost you nothing, which I'm sure will be good news for you.

Scrooge Will they be able to see me?

Christmas Present No, which I'm sure will be good news for them!

Scrooge I could do with another one of those drinks.

Christmas Present Later. For the time being, it is better for you to see things as they really are. Come with me!

Act II/Scene 2

Scene 2a

The Cratchits' house

Mrs. Cratchit, Bob's pretty wife, lifts the lid of the copper to stir the contents inside, sniffs them approvingly and then lowers the lid of the bubbling cauldron. Bob Cratchit is carefully assembling and mixing the ingredients for his home-made punch. Two more of the Cratchit children, a boy and a girl, chase one another noisily around the kitchen and knock over a chair. Bob finally holds up his hands to silence them.

Bob Cratchit *(gently)* Now listen my dears, your mother and I want you to have a good time, but you don't have to wreck the house to do it, all right?

The children calm down and nod.

The singing happens while the table is being set and preparations are being made for their Christmas dinner.

"Good Times"

Bob Cratchit

We've had good times before,
And we'll have good times again.

Whatever we've done,

We've made life fun.

And when things were bad -

And bad times we've had -

We've fought and we've won -

One for all, all for one!

Mrs. Cratchit and Bob

So when things ain't goin' right,

We try with all of our might!

You'll see us unite

Like fightin' men!

We know we'll come through,

An' friends, when we do,

We'll only know good times

Again!

With great ceremony, Bob wafts the smells of the set table and takes in a big whiff.

Mrs. Cratchit The stuffing's ready, dear.

Bob promptly goes to help. With immense pride he carries across to the parlor table a crockery platter on which sits the scrawny, poorly plucked goose. The pile of stuffing is bigger than the goose.

Bob Cratchit The marriage of roast chicken and sage and onion stuffing a la Cratchit is one of the culinary miracles of our day - a living legend throughout the length and breadth of Camden Town! (*He sets the platter down upon the table*) The only remaining problem, my dears, is whether to put the stuffing inside the goose or the goose inside the stuffing.

This is greeted with renewed gusts of mirth from the family. The family continues to prepare the table for the celebration meal.

Bob Cratchit But since the ultimate intention is to put them both inside ourselves, I don't suppose it matters much!

All the Cratchit Children join in the spirit of the song and parade around the parlor as they sing

“Good Times”

All

We've had good times before,
And we'll have good times again.
Whatever we've done,
We've made life fun.
And when things were bad -
And bad times we've had -
We've fought and we've won -
One for all, all for one!
So when things ain't goin' right,
We try with all of our might!
You'll see us unite
Like fightin' men!
We know we'll come through,
An' friends, when we do,
We'll only know good times
Again!

Kathy and Tiny Tim enter looking highly delighted with life.

Bob Cratchit And here they are - the one and only carol-singing Cratchits, newly returned from their triumphant musical tour of Regent's Park and the Euston Road

Bob and Mrs. Cratchit

All We've had good times before,
An' we'll 'ave good times again.
Whatever we've done,
We've made life fun.
An' when things were bad -
An' bad times we've 'ad -

We've fought an' we've won -
One for all, all for one!

Crachit Family

So when things ain't goin' right,
We try with all of our might!
You'll see us unite
Like fightin' men!
We know we'll come through,
An' friends, when we do,
We'll only know good times -
Goodbye to the bad times -
We'll only know good times
Again!

Bob lifts Tiny Tim onto his lap between him and Mrs. Crachit

Bob and Mrs. Cratchit

We know we'll come through
An' Tim-when we do ...
All We'll only know good times -
Goodbye to the bad times -
We'll only know good times
Again!

The entire family cheers and applauds itself. Bob Cratchit hugs his son and kisses him, and hugs Kathy, and then hugs the entire family.

Mrs. Cratchit How did you do, Tiny Tim?

Tiny Tim Ten pence ha'penny!

Redoubled cheers as he proudly displays his handful of copper coins.

Mrs. Cratchit Well done! And you too, Kathy!

Bob Cratchit Another fantastic coup by young Timothy Cratchit, the financial wizard! At only seven years of age, the youngest millionaire in the vast Cratchit empire! Let's put the pennies in the jar ...

Mrs. Cratchit (to Kathy) And how did little Tim behave?

Bob Cratchit sets Tiny Tim on a chair at the parlor table and begins to arrange the pouring of punch into tiny glasses and egg cups.

Kathy Good as gold. When we sang outside the church, he let them see he was a cripple, to remind them at Christmas that it was Jesus who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.

Bob Cratchit Ladies and gentlemen, if I may steal a moment of your valuable time, I would like you to drink to the sparkling good health of the two gentlemen whose industry and generosity have made possible our sumptuous Christmas repast - Master Timothy Cratchit ...

They all raise their glasses

Bob Cratchit ... and Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge.

They all abruptly lower their glasses. Scrooge mutters a surprised and pleased reaction to the mention of his name in this context - until he sees the smiles fade from the children's faces and Mrs. Cratchit who is looking at her husband as though he is mad.

Mrs. Cratchit Mr. Scrooge? What are you trying to do – spoil our Christmas?

Bob Cratchit His money paid for the chicken, my dear.

Mrs. Cratchit No! Your money paid for the chicken, my dear.

Bob Cratchit But he paid me the money!

Mrs. Cratchit Because you earned it, my love! Believe me! Fifteen shillings a week at three pence an hour, and not a penny raise in eight years. You earned it!

Scrooge, embarrassed, looks sheepishly at Christmas Present)

Bob Cratchit Mr. Scrooge assures me that times are hard.

Mrs. Cratchit He's right. For you, they are! But not for himself!

Bob Cratchit Nonetheless, he is the founder of our feast, and we shall toast to him!

Scrooge (*nodding in agreement*) Quite right!

Mrs. Cratchit 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 he'd have indigestion for a month!

Bob Cratchit Ethel, my dear, the children! Christmas!

Mrs. Cratchit It needs to be Christmas Day, Bob, to give a toast to a rotten, stingy old miser like Scrooge!

Scrooge gives the Ghost an embarrassed smile. The Ghost chuckles

Bob Cratchit But, Ethel ...

Mrs. Cratchit You know he is, Bob. Nobody knows it better than you, my poor love.

The sparkle seems to have left Bob Cratchit. Tiny Tim hobbles over to him, hugs him and hands him his glass of punch. Bob touches his wife's hand, smiles at her sadly and raises his glass to her.

Bob Cratchit To Christmas, my dear.

Mrs. Cratchit Children, we will thank Jesus, and give a toast to your father, for all the love and happiness he gives us, and to Tiny Tim, for the health we wish him ... *(She catches Bob's eye)* And for the sake of your father. I'll even give as toast to that old miser Mr. Scrooge. Long life to him, and to us all!

Bob Cratchit A merry Christmas to us all.

Children Merry Christmas.

Bob Cratchit God bless us.

Tiny Tim God bless us, every one.

They drink. Bob Cratchit hugs Tiny Tim and the family freezes.

Christmas Present What an unpleasant child! You know, there are few things more nauseating than a happy family enjoying themselves at Christmas! Do you not agree, Scrooge?

Scrooge I think Bob Cratchit's really rather fond of me!

The Ghost roars with laughter.

Christmas Present So's his wife! Couldn't you tell?

Scrooge She doesn't really know me!

Christmas Present That is one of the few things wherein Fate has blessed her.

Cratchit family unfreezes.

Bob Cratchit As I said to the Lord Mayor, if Her Most Gracious Majesty is feeling bored, I said, you just wheel her over to Camden Town, I said! We'll have her back on her regal feet in no time, I said, with a glass of Bob Cratchit's hot punch ... and a song from young Tiny Tim.

All heads turn to Tiny Tim. Tim blushes, but finally responds to the vociferous urging of his brothers and sisters. Bob Cratchit lifts him up to stand on a chair. The family cheers and applauds. Everyone falls silent.

“The Beautiful Day”

Tiny Tim

On a beautiful day
That I dream about
In a world I would love to see
Is a beautiful place
Where the sun comes out -
And it shines in the sky for me.
On this beautiful winter's morning,
If my wish could come true
Somehow,
Then the beautiful day
That I dream about
Would be here
And now.

Cratchits

On a beautiful day
That I dream about
In a world I would love to see
Is a beautiful place
Where the sun comes out -
And it shines in the sky for me.
On this beautiful winter's morning,
If my wish could come true
Somehow,
Then the beautiful day
That I dream about
Would be here
And now.

Tiny Tim coughs into the crook of his arm and loses his balance. Scrooge and Ethel gasp and reach toward Tiny Tim. Bob steadies Tim.

Scrooge wipes a tear from the corner of his eye and looks over his shoulder as they walk away from the scene.

Scrooge What will become of him ... Tiny Tim?

Christmas Present What's this? Concern over a sick child? Have you taken leave of your senses?

Scrooge Don't mock me, Spirit. Is the child very sick?

Christmas Present Well, of course he's sick!

Scrooge Will he ... live?

Christmas Present stares caustically down at Scrooge

Christmas Present What does it matter to you, Ebenezer Scrooge? If he is going to die, then he had better do it, and decrease ...

Both ... the surplus population!

Christmas Present Many think of you, Scrooge, as surplus.

Scrooge hangs his head to hear his own words quoted. Scrooge looks back over at the Cratchits in their house.

Scrooge I should like to go home now.

Christmas Present No. We have one last call to make. Come with me.

Scrooge touches Christmas Present's robe. There is a blinding flash of light.

Blackout.

"Good Times" underscore. Storefronts come out. Setting for the nephew's house is placed downstage center.

Act II/Scene 3

Scrooge's Nephew's sitting-room

As the Lights come up, the Party Guests come on stage, among them Scrooge's nephew, Harry and his pretty wife, Helen. They proceed to the front and sit together in couples. Christmas Present coerces Scrooge to join them and the two sit on the edge/at the end of the group.

Helen Harry, pour everyone a drink.

With a large fancy bottle, the Nephew begins filling the glasses as he speaks. As he does so, Christmas present reaches to fill Scrooge's cup. Scrooge hesitates and pulls his cup back.

Christmas Present It's all right! I'm the guest of honor! (*Scrooge looks confused*) Christmas Kindness! (*Christmas Present pours some "Milk of human Kindness" into Scrooges cup*)

Nephew Ladies and gentlemen, will you please honor me with your undivided attention? That famous moment has arrived that I know you all look forward to in this house every Christmas Eve, when I ask you to toast to the good health and long life of my celebrated Uncle Ebenezer!

The Friends respond to the proposal — albeit with no great show of enthusiasm—and apathetically toast Scrooge. Scrooge's face lights up. He nudges the Ghost

Scrooge Did you hear that? Maybe I've misjudged the boy.

Topper Harry, I've visited you every Christmas for the past five years, and to this day I can never understand this extraordinary toasting to the health of your Uncle Ebenezer! Everybody knows he's the most miserable old skinflint that ever walked God's earth!

Guests Hear, hear ...

Scrooge Who's he?

Christmas Present Oh, just a friend.

Nephew My dear Topper, it's very simple. He is indeed the most despicable old miser ... worse than you could ever possibly imagine ...

The Ghost chuckles

Scrooge You find this amusing?

Christmas Present Believe it or not, he likes you!

Nephew But I look at it this way — if I can wish a merry Christmas to him, who is beyond dispute the most obnoxious and parsimonious of all living creatures ...

Guests Hear, hear!

Christmas Present is helpless with laughter.

Nephew ... then I know in my heart I am truly a man of goodwill!

Scrooge The scoundrel!

Topper Now that I'll toast to!

Scrooge, beside himself, looks over to Topper and glares at him.

Scrooge I don't like you at all!

Christmas Present Wait, there is more to come!

Nephew Besides, I like old Scrooge.

The party goers are astonished. Scrooge perks up.

Christmas Present What did I tell you?

Guests Nonsense ... ! Oh, no ... !

Nephew I truly do! Heaven knows, I have little enough reason to do so after the way he treated our family, but I can't help feeling that hidden somewhere inside that loathsome old carcass of his ... there is a different man fighting to get out!

Topper Careful, Harry — he may be even worse than the one you know!

Laughter from everyone, except Scrooge.

Nephew Heaven forbid! Anyway, that's why I invite him to come here every Christmas, in the forlorn hope that one day he might just drop by and pick enough goodwill to raise his clerk's wages by five shillings a week! Heaven knows, it's high time he did!

Guests Hear, hear! Bravo!

Scrooge You're very free with other people's money.

Christmas Present roars with laughter.

Mary All right Harry, that's enough! I refuse to have my Christmas haunted by thoughts of your despicable old Uncle Ebenezer!

Scrooge is amused at the thought.

Scrooge If you only knew my dear. *(He raises his arms and shrieks at her)*. As for you, nephew, if you were in my will, which you are not! I would disinherit you. Raise my clerks wages!?!? Humbug!

Christmas Present Scrooge, over here, you need some more of this. *(And pours him another drink)*

Topper Harry, Lovely evening. It's late. We must go. Christmas in the morning.

Scrooge *(Sarcastically)* No, no, no! Don't go! Must you really? Oh, dear!...

The Guests take their leave. Scrooge lines up with the hosts, chatting amiably as he bids the Guests farewell.

Scrooge Going already? What a pity! But it was a wonderful evening! Good-night ... good-night ... thank you for coming ...

Harry, unaware of Scrooge, continues to chat to his Guests during Scrooge's speech. The furniture is cleared away.

Nephew ... Good-night, my dear ... Merry Christmas, Topper—I'll try to get Uncle Ebenezer here for you next year!

Topper Don't bother!

Scrooge *(towards Topper)* I don't like you at all!

Nephew Good-night, Mary ... Merry Christmas, everybody.

Guests Merry Christmas!

Christmas Present gently leads Scrooge away from the party. The Guests fade from view, the sound of their laughter drifting off into the darkness.

Act II/Scene 4

Christmas Present Scrooge, my time upon this little planet is very brief. I must leave you now.

Scrooge But we still have so much to talk about! Haven't we?

Christmas Present There is never enough time to say or do all the things we would wish. The thing is to try to do as much as you can with the time that you have. *(walking away)* Remember, Scrooge, time is short, and suddenly you're not there anymore ...

As he speaks, his voice and his form vanish simultaneously.

Scrooge shivers, and looks about him in the gloom.

Scrooge No, wait! Don't go ... Don't leave me ...

Reflective, pensive pause.

Scrooge Was what I saw truly how life was? How life is?

Maybe I was just dreaming. *(Scrooge makes his way to his chair)* I think my mind is just playing tricks on me. What I saw must have been someone else's life. No, it couldn't be. That was my past: Isabel, Fezziwig, Jenny. *(Scrooge sits)* That had to be Cratchit's family and home. My nephew does invite me over every year and I have never accepted his invitation. I can not ignore what I have seen. Something, someone must be trying to show me a different path, a way to a better life.

Shadows appear in the window and Scrooge hears from his past.

Christmas Past: Jesus is life's greatest gift, Ebby. Know His love and share it with those you cherish.

Bob Cratchit: Can I have my wages please Mr. Scrooge?

Isabel: If you met me today you would not love me.

Pensive pause

Scrooge: *(Scrooge quickly stands)* I can not ignore it! I've got to make things right, to turn things around. Something, someone please let me find a better life, a better way of living. I can only hope it's not too late. Only time will tell. *(Scrooge look's up and to the left)* Only time . . .

Lights dim and fog rolls in. A church clock starts to chime three o'clock in the distance. Macabre and ghostly sounds fill the night. Scrooge buries his face in his hands, a man totally in the grip of terror

Scrooge Three o'clock ... "The third at three."

Phantom cloak flies across the top of the room from the back to the front and drops down behind Scrooge. The Phantom then comes up behind Scrooge and touches his shoulder. Scrooge cries out in fear. Christmas future stands still towering over Scrooge. After a pause of silence . . .

Scrooge Am I in the presence of The Ghost of Christmas Yet-to-Come? And are you to show me shadows of the things that will happen in the time before us?

The Phantom nods. Scrooge closes his eyes, summoning up his final reserves of inner strength.

Scrooge Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any apparition I have ever seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear your company. Will you speak to me?

Still the Phantom gives no reply, but lifts one of its shrouded arms and points towards the window out into the night. Scrooge nods timidly and scrambles after him, nightcap askew.

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

The Phantom raises both arms skyward. Thunder and lightning fill the night sky. A howling, icy gale blows through the room. Scrooge stands shivering in his long nightgown, his teeth chattering with a combination of cold and terror. The force of the wind increases until it is a typhoon.

The Lights cross-fade to:

Act II/Scene 5

The street outside Scrooge's office

Scrooge stands beside the Phantom, slightly removed from a crowd of people gathered outside his office. Tom Jenkins polishes the gleaming brass "Scrooge & Marley" nameplate with his shirt-sleeve

Tom Jenkins There it is, friends, now as bright as the happy thoughts the mere mention of the name Scrooge brings to our minds! *(He addresses the Crowd)* Ladies and gentlemen. We are gathered here today because we are united by a common bond —

The Crowd raises a cheer

Tom Jenkins — namely our feelings of gratitude to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge

The Crowd roars its raucous agreement

Tom Jenkins I don't think any of us could ever hope to find the words to describe the true depth of our feelings towards him!

Scrooge *(to the Phantom)* Is this the future?

The Phantom nods. It is clear that Scrooge, already in a highly emotional condition, is deeply touched. He starts to move among the crowd.

Tom Jenkins *(quieting the mob)* All right now, my friends, settle down, if you please.

Scrooge That's Tom Jenkins ... the hot soup man. Owes me six pounds. I must say he looks uncommonly happy for a man so deep in debt.

Tom Jenkins I completely understand how emotional you all feel about this most important celebration ...

Another rousing cheer from the Crowd. Scrooge observes in the Crowd the smiling faces of Bisset, and the Dilbers, who run the knitwear stall, the Pringles and others.

Scrooge All these people owe me money. They love me, and I never knew.

Tom Jenkins ... But may I ask you to kindly 'old yer emotions in check. We are all deeply moved, and those of us what have been in debt to Mr. S over the years will never forget the rare and beautiful thing he's just done for all of us, right?

Crowd Right!

The Crowd cheers. Scrooge is delighted at the Crowd's reaction, and questions them, forgetting they can neither see nor hear him

Scrooge What did I do? What did I do? Whatever it was, it has made them truly happy. And I am the cause!

*Scrooge steps up on to the mounting block in front of his office to address the crowd
Tom Jenkins puts up his hands for silence as he enters Scrooge's office.*

Scrooge My friends. I thank you from the bottom of my heart! I shall remember this moment until my dying day.

Tom Jenkins comes out of the office and produces Scrooge's black notebook, from which he proceeds to tear the pages, tossing them into the air. The Crowd's cheers of appreciation coincide with Scrooge's speech

Scrooge And may I say with all humility —

Cheers from Crowd as Tom Jenkins tears and throws pages of the black debtors record notebook.

Scrooge — that I have labored unceasingly all my life —

Another cheer as Tom Jenkins tears and throws more pages.

Scrooge — to be worthy of this moving demonstration of your feelings towards me!

Another cheer as Tom Jenkins tears and throws more pages.

“Thank You Very Much”

Tom Jenkins

On be' alf of all the people

'Oo 'ave assembled 'ere,

I would merely like to mention, if I may,

That our unanimous attitude

Is one of lasting gratitude

For what our friend

'As done for us today!

An' therefore I would simply like to say ...

*At a gesture from Tom Jenkins, four Men emerge from Scrooge's office carrying a coffin which they dump heavily and unceremoniously next to the unseen Scrooge
This produces a great roar of approval from the Crowd. Scrooge, wallowing in the Crowd's apparent affection for him, does not notice the coffin.*

Thank you very much!

Thank you very much!

That's the nicest thing
That anyone's ever done for me!
I may sound double-dutch,
But my delight is such
I feel as if a losin' war's
Been won for me!
An' if I 'ad a flag
I'd 'ang me flag out —
To add a sort of final victory touch!
But since I left me flag at 'ome
I'll simply 'ave ter say
Thank you very, very, very much!
Scrooge and Crowd
Thank you very, very, very much!

Cheers from the Crowd around him. Tom Jenkins jumps up and stands on Scrooge's coffin. He sings to it with unabashed cheerfulness. Scrooge, unaware of the situation, is having a wonderful time.

Tom Jenkins
Thank you very much!
Thank you very much!
That's the nicest thing
That anyone's ever done for me!
It sounds a bit bizarre,
But things the way they are
I feel as if another life's
Begun for me!
Company
An' if I had a cannon
I would fire it —
To add a sort of celebration touch!
But since I left me cannon at 'orne
I'll simply 'aye ter say
Thank you very, very, very much!
Scrooge
Thank you very, very, very much!
Company
Thank you very much!
Thank you very much!
That's the nicest thing
That anyone's ever done for me!
It isn't every day
Good fortune comes me way!
I never thought the future would be fun for me.

An' if I 'ad a bugle
I would blow it —
To add a sort of 'ow's-yer-father touch!
But since I left me bugle at 'ome
I'll simply 'ave ter say
Thank you very, very, very much!

Scrooge No, my dear friends! It is I who should be grateful to you!

Company

Thank you very much! Thank you very much!
That's the nicest thing
That anyone's ever done for me!
The future looks all right!
In fact it looks so bright
I feel as if they're
Polishing the sun for me!
An' if I 'ad a drum
I'd 'ave to bang it!
To add a sort of rumpty-tumpty touch!
But since I left me drummer at 'ome —
I'll simply 'ave ter say
Thank you very, very, very much,
Thank you very, very, very:
Thank you very much!

Willing hands heave Scrooge's coffin. The Crowd moves off, carrying the coffin off stage and down the aisle singing and cheering, with Tom Jenkins leading the way.

Scrooge, In a very good mood, hums "Thank You Very Much" to himself

Scrooge Spirit, I shall not forget this lesson, trust me. May I go now?

The Phantom points upstage. Scrooge turns

The Lights cross-fade to:

Act II/Scene 6

The Cratchit's house

Scrooge Bob Cratchit's house. Why have we come here again?

Mrs. Cratchit and the Children are seated around the kitchen table. The parlor is half-heartedly prepared for Christmas, and the sadness in the faces of the Cratchits is in depressing contrast to Scrooge's previous visit. Mrs. Cratchit and her children are gathered around Mrs. Cratchit and she puts her hand up to her face

Mrs. Cratchit I mustn't show weak eyes to your father when he gets home. It must be near his time.

Martha Past it. But I think he has walked a little slower these past few evenings.

They are all very quiet again. At last Mrs. Cratchit speaks in a steady, cheerful voice, that only falters once.

Mrs. Cratchit I have known him to walk very fast indeed with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder.

Martha So have I. Often.

Mrs. Cratchit But he was light to carry, and his father loved him. So it was no trouble ... no trouble.

Scrooge looks at the lonely crutch which Tiny Tim previously used but is now hanging on the wall.

Scrooge There is Tiny Tim's crutch, but . . . there is no Tiny Tim. *(He stares coldly at the Phantom)*
Where is he?

*The Phantom leads Scrooge off
The Lights cross-fade to*

Act II/Scene 7

The music starts under. The Cratchit's house is closed revealing a simple graveyard, a bleak aspect of cold grey and black stone against a somber slate sky. Bob Cratchit is kneeling in front of a simple headstone. The only splash of color in the graveyard is the bunch of violets in his hands. He is infinitely sad, but he keeps a brave face in front of Tiny Tim. He places the bunch of violets at the foot of the white cross, which is simply inscribed "Timothy Cratchit, 1837-1844 - Aged 7 years" We faintly hear a voice-over of Tiny Tim singing the song he sang for his family the previous Christmas.

"The Beautiful Day" (Reprise)

Tiny Tim (voice-over)

On a beautiful day
That I dream about
In a world I would love to see
On this beautiful winter's morning,
If my wish could come true
Somehow
Then the beautiful day
That I dream about
Would be here
And ...

Bob Cratchit I must go now, my little fellow. I promised your mother I'd help her with the Christmas dinner, but I'll come and see you again tomorrow ... same time, all right ... ? *(His voice breaks, and for a moment he bows his head, too heart-broken to move)* Oh, Tim!

Then he pulls himself together, attempts his usual cheery smile and clambers to his feet. With a last sad look at the pathetic little grave, he hurries away.

Scrooge *(watching him go)* Poor Tiny Tim! Spirit, you have shown me a Christmas yet to come that mingles great happiness with great sadness. Answer me one question. Are these the shadows of things that will be, or are they shadows of things that may be, only?

For answer, the Phantom points up to a large, grey, flat slab or stone near Tiny Tim's grave, previously obscured in the gloom. Now clearly visible on it are the words "EBENEZER SCROOGE". Scrooge utters a strangled cry. His face fills with terror as he hears the familiar voice of Marley calling him.

Marley *(Off stage)* Scrooooo-ooo-oge!

Scrooge Oh no, not you again! No! I beg you, no!

He turns back in horror to the Phantom, who points from Scrooge to the grave and then advances slowly towards him. Scrooge backs away, mesmerized with fear, his voice a hoarse whisper

Scrooge Spirit! If you are indeed here to show me the errors of my past ways, tell me. So that I may, by my good deeds, sponge away the writing on this dreaded stone!

Marley appears, hand extended and a thin welcoming smile on his gaunt face, his chains clanking behind him.

Marley Ebenezer Scrooge! We've been expecting you! You're early! Not that it matters in the scope of eternity! Welcome!

Act II/Scene 8

Hell

The stage is filled with red light.

Marley I heard you were coming down today, so I thought I would come and greet you and show you to your quarters. Nobody else wanted to.

Scrooge That is very civil of you Marley. I — er — am I dead?

Marley As dead as a coffin nail!

Scrooge (*pointing upward*) Aah! I had rather hoped I'd end up . . . up there!

Marley (*Off handed*) Did you indeed? Yes, that's what they all say! By the way, you may find your office rather cramped, but not, I trust, unfamiliar!

Scrooge Office?

Marley Yes, your activities in life were so pleasing to Lucifer that he has appointed you to be his personal clerk — a singular honor! You will, so to speak, be to him what Bob Cratchit was to you!

Scrooge That's not fair! It's . . . it's . . .

Marley Diabolical! I know, I must confess I find it not altogether amusing. Oh, I almost forgot! I knew there was something else! They apologize that your chain wasn't ready for your arrival, but it was so big they had to take on extra little devils at the foundry to finish it!

Scrooge groans. Marley sniggers.

Marley Ah, here it is now! It's even bigger than I thought it would be! My word! Makes mine look like a watch chain!

Four shadowy phantom-like figures, struggling with the weight of Scrooge's chains, come from four different sides of the stage and head towards and surround Scrooge.

Scrooge I can't wear that! I'll never be able to move!

Marley gazes at the chain in amazement. Scrooge begins to struggle under the weight of the chains as the phantoms drape them across his shoulders and chest and around his back. There are heavy clanking sounds and Scrooge's knees begin to buckle under the weight and he falls to the ground in anguish.

Scrooge Don't let them do this Marley, I beg you!

Marley (*Smiling*) It is quite a chain, isn't it!

Scrooge is wincing and wiggling to try and get free of the chains but eventually falls to the ground under the weight.

Scrooge (*Looking upward*) Oh, Jesus! Hear me, I pray you! I am not the man I was! I vow I will honor You in my heart, and serve You, Jesus, every day of the year! And not just at Christmas! I swear it! Only spare me, that I may live to prove it! Jesus, help me!

The Phantom emits a spine-chilling banshee wail as thunder peals and lightning flashes.

Blackout.

Lights come up center stage for Pastor's salvation message.

Blackout.

Act 2 Scene 9

Lights come back up...

Scrooge's bedroom. Scrooge is heavily entangled in his sheets is fighting to free himself.

Scrooge Where am I? I'm in my own home. I'm not dead! I'm not in hell! *(He throws off his sheets)* I haven't got any chains! Perhaps it didn't happen after all ... perhaps it did ... But I'm alive! I'm alive! I've got a chance to change, and I will not be the man I was!

The music builds under

"I'll Begin Again"

Scrooge

I'll begin again.

I will build my life.

I will live to know

That I've fulfilled my life.

I'll begin today —

(He gets off the bed)

Throw away the past —

And the future I build

Will be something that will last.

I will take the time

I have left to live,

And I'll give it all

That I have left to give.

I will live my days

For my fellow men,

And I'll live in praise

Of that moment when

I was able to begin again!

He throws back the curtains and looks out at the world, a new man. Behind him, the storefronts come out into the street.

I'll begin again

I will change my fate!

I will show the world

That it is not too late!

I will never stop —

While I still have time —

Till I stand at the top

Of that mountain I must climb!

I will start anew.

I will make amends.

And I'll make quite certain
That the story ends
On a note of hope —
On a strong amen —
And I'll thank Jesus
And remember when
I was able to begin again!
I'll begin again!

Scrooge stands in the middle of the street, laughing and crying with joy. The church bells merrily chime nine o'clock

The Lights cross-fade to:

Act II/Scene 10

A London street — Cheapside

A small boy trudges through the snow along the street. He stops and stares in amazement at Scrooge in his nightclothes.

Scrooge Boy ... Boy! What day is it?

Boy Today? Why, Christmas Day, o'course!

Scrooge *(letting out a bellow of triumph and clapping his hands)* It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! *(He turns back to the boy)* Do you know the butcher's shop in the next street but one?

Boy I should hope so!

Scrooge What an intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! Do you happen to know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up in the window? Not the big one — the enormous one!

Boy You mean the one as big as me?

Scrooge What a delightful boy! So witty! It's a pleasure to talk to him! That's the one!

Boy It's still there!

Scrooge It is? Go and buy it!

Boy *(Bewildered)* What's that?

Scrooge Here's two sovereigns. Go and wake up the butcher and have him open up his shop. Bring me that turkey, and I'll give you tuppence ... sixpence ... a shilling ... I'll give you half a crown! Go on, run ... run ... run!

The boy disappears like a shot. Scrooge chuckles.

Scrooge Oh, what a lovely boy! I think I'm going to like children. *(He hurries next door to the toy shop and bangs on the door)*

The toy shop owner, Mr. Pringle, his face covered in shaving cream, emerges and stares at Scrooge in a state of shock.

Pringle Mr. Scrooge?

Scrooge Good-morning, Pringle. A merry Christmas to you. I want some toys — lots of toys — for all my young friends on this joyous day.

Pringle T-t-toys?! You, Mr. Scrooge?

Scrooge Yes. Well, don't stand there gaping, man — make a list.

Pringle A list? Oh! Yes! Of course, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge (*pointing at the carousel*) I want that carousel. And that and that and that. And two of those and the hobby horse and some flutes — some trumpets, oh, and that doll in the corner, and some bows and arrows!

Pringle (*dumbfounded*) Bows and arrows ...

Scrooge Oh yes, I must have a cricket bat, and these, and that horse and this piano ... I like that, oh, and this beautiful coach and several kites and these boats and some of these and I'll have that ...

The traumatized Pringle scribbles at great speed, trying to keep up with Scrooge's dizzying selections.

Pringle Y -yes, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge And how much is all that?

Pringle I - I - I ... how much? Er—

Scrooge Never mind. Here are some sovereigns. You can keep the change.

Pringle, astonished, leans against the wall with his forearm to his forehead.

Pringle I ... er ... Th — thank you, Mr. Scrooge.

Scrooge And I shall require the services of several small boys — to help carry it all! Each boy will receive half a crown!

Mr. Pringle Half a — yes, Mr. Scrooge!

A radiant Scrooge turns from the toy shop to be met by Bissett, the Butcher, and the Boy, who is almost totally obscured by the gigantic turkey he is carrying

Scrooge That's what I call a turkey! It's twice the size of Tiny Tim! Come along, dear boy — thank you. Merry Christmas!

Bissett But Mr. Scrooge - what's happened?

Scrooge What's happened? It's perfectly simple, Bissett. I've discovered true life!

An ever-strengthening musical undercurrent — No. 22a, the prelude to the extended musical finale that is to come — begins to build from this point. The dumbfounded Bissett, still half-asleep, turns to Mr. Pringle and shrugs in wonderment.

Bissett That was old Scrooge, wasn't it?

"I Like Life" (Reprise)

They follow Scrooge in disbelief at what they are witnessing. Scrooge begins an eccentric, Pied-Piper-like procession through the streets of Cheapside. As Scrooge sings, Mr. Pringle and his assistants bring out a succession of gift-wrapped packages, while the Boy organizes the open-mouthed Urchins to transport the mountain of purchases. Passers-by stop to stare in amazement at the scene

Scrooge

I like life! Life likes me!
Life and I very fully agree
Life is fine! Life is good!
 'Specially mine,
Which is just as it should be!
I like being kind—
And why not?
Life's a pleasure
That I deny not!

He hands gifts at random to various onlookers. The spirit of Christmas builds around him as the song progresses. The portly Gentleman approaches.

Scrooge Ah, Mr. Jollygoode! A very Merry Christmas to you!

Jollygoode (*Caught off guard*) Er . . . Merry Christmas Mr. Scrooge!

Scrooge Come by my office on Monday morning and I will give you one hundred guineas for your most worthy cause! And the same every Christmas!

The crowd is visible astonished.

Jollygoode B-b-but, Mr. Scrooge . . . Why?

Scrooge For a jolly good reason, Mr. Jollygoode! (*He points to the Crowd*) They will tell you why. Excuse me!

He giggles and dances around singing.

Scrooge

I like life! Here and now!
Life and I made a mutual vow —
Till I die,
Life and I —
We'll both try
To be better somehow!
Where there's music and laughter,
Happiness is rife!
Why?
Because I like life!

Scrooge disappears backstage.

“Father Christmas (Reprise)

A roar of laughter and astonishment from the crowd goes up as Scrooge disappears.

Jollygoode *(in total shock)* I don't believe it!

Company

Farver Christmas!
Farver Chris'mas!
He's the greatest man
In the whole wide world!
In the whole wide world!
And he knows it!
Every Christmas,
Farver Christmas
Puts a great big sack
On his dear old back —
Cos he loves us all —
And he shows it!
And he goes
For a sleigh-ride.
If it snows
Then he may ride all night!
But that's all right!
In the morning —
Christmas morning' —
If you lift your eyes,
There's a big surprise!
On your bed you'll see
There's a gift from Farver Christmas —
From Farver Christmas —

That's how Christmas oughta be!

Act II/Scene 11

Scrooge reappears in a Santa suit and with a giant red gift bag. Everyone swirls around Scrooge as he is rummaging through his gift bag. The Cratchits enter from stage right.

Scrooge *(unrecognizable)* Ho ho ho!

The procession suddenly parts to reveal the assembled Cratchit family. The Cratchit Children are a-tremble with excitement at the sight of Santa Claus. Cratchit's jaw drops open when he sees Scrooge and his followers. But there is no glimmer of recognition of his employer

Scrooge Robert Cratchit, esquire? *(Bob Cratchit nods dumbly)* A merry Christmas to you, sir, from Santa Claus himself!

Bob Cratchit Forgive me, sir, but I think you've got the wrong people.

Scrooge Nonsense! I haven't gone to the wrong people in a thousand years! *(He grabs the huge turkey from the Boy and turns to Mrs. Cratchit. Briskly)* Don't worry about that scrawny little chicken of yours, Mrs. Cratchit! You can use it as stuffing for this!

Mrs. Cratchit *(amazed)* Thank you, sir! But how did you know about ... ?

Scrooge *(ignoring her)* Now, where are the other presents — the ones for the children?

The urchins hand Scrooge the red bag and Scrooge begins rummaging through it showers several gifts on the Cratchit children, chattering away all the time.

Scrooge This is for you, my dear ... and this one is for you. *(To Kathy)* And this pretty doll is for you.

Kathy It's the dolly in the corner!

Scrooge And these, Bob Cratchit, are for yourself and your lady.

He presents the catatonic Cratchits with two leather purses, each jingling with gold sovereigns. The whole family is struck dumb by the onslaught. Scrooge chuckles and rubs his hands gleefully.

Scrooge Well, I must leave you now. As you may imagine, this is an extremely busy day for me, and I have many other calls to make!

He turns to go. Tiny Tim, the only one of the family who hasn't received a present, is too disappointed to utter. Then Scrooge turns back. He kneels down in front of the giftless Tiny Tim and looks at him tenderly

Scrooge Oh, I almost forgot. This is for you!

At the snap of the fingers from Scrooge, two Children bring a large package and set it on the floor in front of Tiny Tim. Scrooge lifts off the wrapping that covers it, revealing the carousel that was the centerpiece of the toyshop window.

Tiny Tim You didn't steal it, did you?

Scrooge (*chuckling*) A merry Christmas, Tiny Tim!

Tiny Tim puts his arms around Scrooge's neck and hugs him. Scrooge, deeply moved, kisses the child on the cheek, then bounces back to his feet, smiling from ear to ear.

Scrooge You still don't recognize me, do you, Bob Cratchit?

Bob Cratchit (*nodding and shaking his head in total confusion*) Yes, no -I mean - you're Father Christmas!

Scrooge throws back his head and roars with laughter, utterly delighted. With a flourish he pulls his beard and whiskers off. Mrs. Cratchit and her three daughters scream in unison.

Mrs. Cratchit It's Mr. Scrooge! He's gone mad!

Bob Cratchit It's all right, dear — there's nothing to be afraid of!

Scrooge No, I haven't gone mad! And on Monday, when your salary will doubled—

Bob Cratchit He has gone mad!

Scrooge — we'll sit together and discuss what I can do to help your family. To start with, we'll find the right doctors to get young Tiny Tim well. And we will get him well, you know, Bob!

Bob Cratchit (*nodding feebly*) Yes ... I believe you ... I believe anything.

Scrooge And may this be the merriest Christmas of all our lives!

Tiny Tim God bless us, every one!

Bob Cratchit opens wide his arms to embrace his wife, and with cries of infinite delight the Cratchit family joins the ever-growing, swirling Crowd and accompany Father Christmas on his merry Christmas way. Scrooge and his entourage approach Tom Jenkins.

Scrooge Tom Jenkins, about the six pounds you owe me!

Tom Jenkins You agreed to a few more days Mr. Scrooge — I just need —

Scrooge You can keep it! It's my Christmas present to you!

Tom Jenkins' legs give way under him

Tom Jenkins Oh! God bless you this Christmas Day, Mr. Scrooge! Thank you very much!

Scrooge And that goes for anybody else who owes me money! You can keep it ... as of this day, all my debts are forgiven!

As Scrooge says this he shows them all his little black book, from which he tears out all the pages and throws them away. The Crowd goes mad with delight and gives a great cheer

The music joins in and everyone starts to sing

“Thank You Very Much” (Reprise)

Crowd/Chorus

Thank you very much!!

That's the nicest thing

That anyone's ever done for me!

Scrooge It sounds a bit bizarre,

But things the way they are,

I feel as if another life's

Begun for me!

All An' if I 'ad a drum

I'd 'ave to bang it! —

To add a sort of rumpty-tumpty touch!

But since I left me drummer at 'ome,

I'll simply 'ave ter say

Thank you very, very, very much!

Harry and his wife enter and stare at the singing, dancing, cavorting Scrooge in total disbelief.

Scene 11a

Nephew Uncle Ebenezer!? Is that you?

Scrooge Merry Christmas to you, me dear boy, and to your enchanting bride! We were just on our way to your house ...

He turns to the gift-laden Urchins and removes some packages from them.

Scrooge... with some presents. Here! These are from an old fool who deeply regrets all the Christmases gone by that he might have shared with you! (*To Helen*) And this is for you, my dear! A sort of belated wedding gift!

He hands the last and most elaborate package to Helen. She kisses him. Scrooge finds himself looking into a face hauntingly like Isabel's

Helen Oh, Uncle Ebenezer, thank you! Christmas lunch is sharp at three. May we expect you?

Scrooge You may! I'll be there! *(He wipes a tear from his eyes)*

Church bells ring.

Scrooge Merry Christmas, everyone! Merry Christmas!

Different people in the crowd pat Scrooge on the back in appreciation. Others shake his hand. One person, startling Scrooge, gives him a big hug.

Scrooge I love Christmas! . . . I love children! . . . I love people! I love everybody! *(The Crowd cheers in joy)* I have to go now and get ready . . . *(He starts to move off, then turns to face the audience)* I'm spending Christmas *(his voice falters for a second, but he completes the sentence proudly)* . . . with my family.

“I'll Begin Again” (Reprise)

Scrooge

I will start anew —
I will make amends —
And I'll make quite certain
That the story ends
On a note of hope —
On a strong amen —
And I'll thank the world
And remember when
I was able to begin again!
I'll begin again!

Scene 11b: “Curtain Call”

Bows during the instrumental version of “I Like Life.” After bows, company sings:

“Thank You Very Much” (Reprise)

Crowd/Chorus

Thank you very much!!
That's the nicest thing
That anyone's ever done for me!
Scrooge It sounds a bit bizarre,
But things the way they are,
I feel as if another life's
Begun for me!

All An' if I 'ad a drum
I'd 'ave to bang it! —
To add a sort of rumpty-tumpty touch!
But since I left me drummer at 'ome,
I'll simply 'ave ter say
Thank you very, very, very much!

Company begins to exit to the back through the aisles still singing:

“Thank You Very Much” (Reprise)

Crowd/Chorus

Thank you very much!!
That's the nicest thing
That anyone's ever done for me!
Scrooge It sounds a bit bizarre,
But things the way they are,
I feel as if another life's
Begun for me!
All An' if I 'ad a drum
I'd 'ave to bang it! —
To add a sort of rumpty-tumpty touch!
But since I left me drummer at 'ome,
I'll simply 'ave ter say
Thank you very, very, very much!