

CHARLES DICKENS'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Adapted and Arranged

by

David Jacklin

Adaptation and musical arrangements
©1997/1998/2005
David Jacklin

R. R. 1 Keays Road
Balderson, ON
K0G 1A0
613 267 1884
barndoorproductionstheatre@gmail.com
www.barndoorproductions.ca

Cast of Characters
(In order of speaking)

The Narrator (but, please don't make him Dickens)
Ebenezer Scrooge
Bob Cratchit
Fred, Scrooge's nephew
1st Portly Gentleman
2nd Portly Gentleman
Carolling Boy
Marley's Ghost
1st Spirit (Ghost of Christmas Past)
Boys at Play
Scrooge as a Boy
Little Fan, Scrooge's Sister
Old Fezziwig
A Fiddler
The 3 Misses Fezziwig
Mrs. Fezziwig
The Young Belle
Scrooge as a Young Man
The Older Belle
Belle's Daughter
Belle's Husband
2nd Spirit (The Ghost of Christmas Present)

Mrs. Cratchit
Belinda Cratchit
Martha Cratchit
Peter Cratchit
Cratchit Boy
Cratchit Girl
Tiny Tim Cratchit
Scrooge's Niece
Topper
The Plump Sister
The Sister with the Roses
3rd Spirit (The Ghost of Christmas Future) (mute)
Whispered Voice
1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Gentlemen
Old Joe
The Charwoman
Mrs. Dilber, the Laundress
The Man In Faded Black
Caroline
Caroline's Husband
A Boy In The Street

A QUARTET (standard SATB) is indicated for several of the songs, along with SOLISTS in some spots.

Musical Numbers

page Song

Act One

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 1. | 1 | Overture (instrumental) |
| 2. | 1 | Come, Good Christians All (Company) |
| 3. | 7 | Wassail All Over The Town (Quartet) |
| 4. | 15 | Glad Tidings (Company) |
| 5. | 19 | Carol for the Nativity (Soloists and Company) |
| 6a. | 20 | Sir Roger de Coverley (instrumental) |
| 6b. | 24 | Sir Roger de Coverley (instrumental) |
| 7a. | 26 | The Old "Waits" Carol (Quartet) |
| 7b. | 28 | The Old "Waits" Carol, reprise (Quartet) |
| 8. | 29 | The Mistletoe Bough (instrumental) |

Act Two

- | | | |
|------|----|---|
| 9. | 30 | Improvisation on Lully Lullay (instrumental) |
| 10. | 31 | Good Christian Men, Rejoice (Company) |
| 11a. | 34 | The Boar's Head Carol (Soloists and Company) |
| 11b. | 36 | The Boar's Head Carol, reprise (Company) |
| 12. | 36 | Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming (Quartet) |
| 13. | 38 | Torches, Torches (Soloists and Company) |
| 14a. | 41 | Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child (Quartet) |
| 14b. | 44 | Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child, reprise (Quartet) |
| 14c. | 48 | Sir Roger de Coverly, instrumental short |
| 14d. | 49 | Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child, 2 nd reprise (Soloist) |
| 15. | 52 | Hark! What Mean Those Holy Voices? (Company) |
| 16. | 53 | Sing Noel (Company) |
| 17. | 58 | The Gloucestershire Wassail (Quartet and Company) |

NOTE: All numbers are based on traditional melodies from the public domain.

NOTES ON PERFORMING THIS VERSION

This is a “musical story theatre” adaptation of Dickens’s classic tale. The performers not only impersonate the characters in the story, but also narrate it – often within the same sentence. Oh, and sing and dance, too.

The show can be done on a bare stage or with more elaborate set(s). An optional video backing is available.

The minimum number for convenient and successful production of this script seems to be 17. The only cast member who does not assume multiple roles is the actor playing Scrooge, after he assumes the role near the beginning of the show. In the end, though, the more the merrier.

Those parts to be spoken in “character voice” are enclosed in single quotes. When the words are not enclosed in quotes, the performer may assume, they are speaking, in general, to the audience. At a few places, e.g. Fred’s interruption of the Narrator with “Exceedingly pretty” and so on, are directed at specific persons on stage – not necessarily characters, though.

The company spend much of the show seated in rows and most of their spoken lines are given from those positions. The director can use their imagination in finding ways to split up the “SEVERALLY” lines: up one row and down the other; ping-ponging back and forth; pairs of speakers; individual speakers counterpointed by groups, etc. Keep it interesting.

In order to indicate some portions where I hear specific voicings, I’ve used a couple of conventions. An asterisk followed by a number in place of a character name means that the lines so indicated are to be spoken by the same person, ie., *1 is always *1. Designation of a line by a single letter (e.g. ‘A.’) indicates that a single person from the company speaks the line, but only for the purposes of that section of the script.

This is a choral work, intended to be done, except for characters, with book in hand. When stepping out to be a specific character, the book should be dropped. To make this fun for all, we usually have a “script decorating” contest, with a prize awarded (as judged by the company) for the most imaginative (and appropriate) script cover. For some reason, this is always won by one of the kids in the cast.

Have fun.

David Jacklin

Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol
ACT I
Stave 1: Marley's Ghost

SETTING: A more or less bare stage, with a rows of chairs angled on either side sufficient to accommodate the COMPANY. The NARRATOR has a chair and small table DSL. If projections are used, then, UC, a projection screen bordered with a 'Victorian-appropriate' frame. Two stools DS and to either side of the screen.

(music: No. 1: Overture; as it plays, the COMPANY enter into the house and mingle with the audience; as the music ends the NARRATOR enters to his table and gavels three times)

NARRATOR

Ladies and Gentlemen! On this the (insert: ordinal number of the current year - 1843; e.g. "173rd") anniversary of the publication of Mr. Dickens's book, pray take your places for the performance!

(music: No. 2: Come, Good Christians All)

(the COMPANY move to the stage, greet each other and move to their chairs as they sing)

ALL

COME, GOOD CHRISTIANS ALL, AND JOIN OUR CAROLLING.
LIFT UP YOUR VOICE, GIVE THANKS TO GOD AND SING!

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

WOMEN

SING WE NOEL TO HAIL OUR NEWBORN KING.
NOEL!

MEN

SING WE NOEL...

ALL

... TO HAIL OUR NEWBORN KING!
COME, GOOD CHRISTIANS ALL, AND JOIN OUR CAROLLING!

SAID THE ANGEL BRIGHT, "O, HASTE, YE SHEPHERDS ALL.
IN BETHLEHEM GO SEEK A LOWLY STALL.

WOMEN

THERE ON YOUR KNEES BEFORE THE SAVIOUR FALL.
NOEL!

MEN

THERE ON YOUR KNEES...

ALL

... BEFORE THE SAVIOUR FALL.
COME, GOOD CHRISTIANS ALL, AND JOIN OUR CAROLLING!

TO THE KINGLY BABE BE NOW AND EVER PRAISE
THAT HE CAME ON EARTH OUR SOULS FROM DEATH TO SAVE.

WOMEN
SING WE OUR JOY UPON THIS DAY OF DAYS.
NOEL!

MEN
SING WE OUR JOY...

ALL
... UPON THIS DAY OF DAYS.
COME, GOOD CHRISTIANS ALL,
AND JOIN OUR CAROLLING!

WOMEN
NOEL!

ALL
COME, GOOD CHRISTIANS ALL,
AND JOIN OUR CAROLLING!

WOMEN
NOEL!

ALL
COME, GOOD CHRISTIANS ALL,
AND JOIN OUR CAROLLING!

PERUSAHAAN COPY ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

(On the button of the music, they all sit, sharply)

NARRATOR
Marley was dead to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the

SEVERALLY
clergyman,
the clerk,
the undertaker,
and the chief mourner.

SCROOGE
Scrooge signed it.

NARRATOR
And Scrooge's name was good upon `Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to.

*1
Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

NARRATOR
Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and I shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for.

Hear! Hear! ALL

*1
You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead. NARRATOR

Of course he did. SCROOGE

Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his

SEVERALLY
sole executor,
sole administrator,
sole assign,
sole friend,
and sole mourner.

NARRATOR
And even Scrooge was not so cut up by the sad event, but that on the very day of the funeral, he solemnised it with an undoubted bargain.

*1
The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story.

Hear, hear! Hear, hear! ALL

NARRATOR
Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge

Scrooge A

and sometimes NARRATOR

Marley B

but he answered to both names. NARRATOR

It was all the same to him. SCROOGE

NARRATOR

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone!

ALL

Scrooge!

SEVERALLY

a squeezing,
wrenching,
grasping,
scraping,
clutching,
covetous,
old

ALL

SINNER!

SEVERALLY

Hard and sharp as flint,
from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire;
secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.

The cold within him froze his old features,
nipped his pointed nose,
shrivelled his cheek,
stiffened his gait;
made his eyes red,
his thin lips blue;
and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice.
A frosty rime was on his head,
and on his eyebrows,
and his wiry chin.

NARRATOR

He carried his own low temperature always about with him. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he. The heaviest rain,

SEVERALLY

and snow,
and hail,
and sleet,

NARRATOR

could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often 'came down' handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

A

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say,

B

My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?'

SEVERALLY

No beggars implored him,
no children asked him what it was o'clock,

*1

no man

*2

or woman

*1

ever once in all his life inquired the way to

*2

such and such a place,

*1

of Scrooge.

C

Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on,
would tug their owners into doorways and up courts.

NARRATOR

But what did Scrooge care?

SCROOGE

It was the very thing he liked.

NARRATOR

To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its
distance, was what the knowing ones call

SCROOGE

'nuts'

NARRATOR

to Scrooge. Once upon a time —

ALL

— of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve —

NARRATOR

— old Scrooge sat

SCROOGE

busy

NARRATOR

in his counting-house.

SEVERALLY

It was cold,

bleak,
biting weather,
foggy withal,

NARRATOR

and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already — it had not been light all day. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole. The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open

SCROOGE

that he might keep his eye upon his clerk,

CRATCHIT

who in a dismal little cell beyond was copying letters.

NARRATOR

Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room;

CRATCHIT

and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel,

SCROOGE

the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part.

CRATCHIT

Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort,

NARRATOR

not being a man of a strong imagination,

CRATCHIT

he failed.

FRED

'A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!'

NARRATOR

It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew,

SCROOGE

who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

SCROOGE

'Bah!' said Scrooge, 'Humbug!'

FRED

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost,

CRATCHIT

this nephew of Scrooge's,

FRED

that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled. 'Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure?'

SCROOGE

'I do,' said Scrooge. 'Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.'

FRED

'Come, then, what right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.'

NARRATOR

Scrooge having no better answer on the spur of the moment, said

SCROOGE

'Bah!'

NARRATOR

again; and followed it up with

SCROOGE

'Humbug.'

FRED

'Don't be cross, uncle!' said the nephew.

SCROOGE

'What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer? If I could work my will 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. He should!'

FRED

'Uncle!' pleaded the nephew.

SCROOGE

'Nephew!' returned the uncle sternly, 'keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.'

FRED

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

SCROOGE

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

FRED

'There are many things from which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among the rest. But I have always thought of Christmas time — apart from the veneration due to its sacred name — as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time when men and women open their shut-up hearts freely, and think of people below them as fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore,

FRED Cont.
uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!

CRATCHIT
The clerk involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark forever.

SCROOGE
'Let me hear another sound from you,' said Scrooge, 'and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! You're quite a powerful speaker, sir, I wonder you don't go into Parliament.'

FRED
'Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.'

NARRATOR
Scrooge said that he would see him —

ALL
(gasp)

NARRATOR
— yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him —
(ALL look sharply to the NARRATOR)
in that extremity first.

ALL
Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! Tsk!

FRED
'But why? Why?'

SCROOGE
'Why did you get married?'

FRED
'Because I fell in love.'

SCROOGE
'Because you fell in love!' growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. 'Good afternoon!'

FRED
'Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?'

SCROOGE
'Good afternoon,' said Scrooge.

FRED
'I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?'

SCROOGE

‘Good afternoon,’ said Scrooge.

FRED

‘I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel to which I have been a party and I’ll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So, a Merry Christmas, uncle!’

SCROOGE

‘Good afternoon.’

FRED

‘And a Happy New Year!’

SCROOGE

‘Good afternoon!’

FRED

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding.

CRATCHIT

He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially.

SCROOGE

‘There’s another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I’ll retire to Bedlam.’

NARRATOR

This lunatic, in letting Scrooge’s nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge’s office, and bowed to him.

1st MAN

‘Scrooge and Marley’s, I believe,’ said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. ‘Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?’

SCROOGE

‘Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago, this very night.’

2nd MAN

‘We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.’

NARRATOR

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits.

1st MAN

‘At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge,’ said the gentleman, ‘it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and Destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.’

SCROOGE

‘Are there no prisons?’

1st MAN

‘Plenty of prisons,’ said the gentleman.

SCROOGE

‘And the Union workhouses?’ demanded Scrooge. ‘Are they still in operation?’

2nd MAN

‘They are. Still. I wish I could say they were not.’

SCROOGE

‘The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?’

2nd MAN

‘Both very busy, sir.’

SCROOGE

‘Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I’m very glad to hear it.’

1st MAN

‘A few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink. and means of warmth. This time is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?’

SCROOGE

‘Nothing!’

2nd MAN

‘You wish to be anonymous?’

SCROOGE

‘I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don’t make merry myself at Christmas and I can’t afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned — they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.’

2nd MAN

‘Many can’t go there; and many would rather die.’

SCROOGE

‘If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides — excuse me — I don’t know that.’

1st MAN

‘But you might know it.’

SCROOGE

‘It’s not my business. It’s enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people’s. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!’

2nd MAN

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point,

1st MAN

the gentlemen withdrew.

SCROOGE

Scrooge returned his labours with an improved opinion of himself,

NARRATOR

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before.

(SFX: bells ring six, in the same key as the upcoming music)

NARRATOR

The ancient tower of a church became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there.

SEVERALLY

The cold became intense.

In the main street, the brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed.

Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke; a glorious pageant.

(music: No. 3: Wassail All Over The Town)

QUARTET

WASSAIL, WASSAIL, ALL OVER THE TOWN!
OUR TOAST IT IS WHITE AND OUR ALE IT IS BROWN.
OUR BOWL IT IS MADE OF THE WHITE MAPLE TREE;
WITH THE WASSAILING BOWL, WE'LL DRINK TO THEE.

THEN HERE'S TO THE MAID IN THE LILY-WHITE SMOCK,
WHO TRIPPED TO THE DOOR AND SLIPPED BACK THE LOCK:
WHO TRIPPED TO THE DOOR AND PULLED BACK THE PIN,
FOR TO LET THESE JOLLY WASSAILERS IN.

THEN, BUTLER, COME FILL US A BOWL OF THE BEST
THEN WE HOPE THAT YOUR SOUL IN HEAVEN MAY REST.
BUT IF YOU DO DRAW US A BOWL OF THE SMALL,
THEN DOWN SHALL GO BUTLER, BOWL AND ALL.

WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL!
WITH THE WASSAILING BOWL, WE'LL DRINK TO THEE.

SEVERALLY

Foggier yet,
and colder!
Piercing,
searching,
biting
cold.

NARRATOR

The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of

BOY

'God bless you, merry gentleman!
May nothing you dismay!'

SCROOGE

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that

SCROOGE

the singer

BOY

AAH!

SCROOGE

AAH!

BOY

AAH!

SCROOGE

AAH!

BOY

AAH!

SCROOGE

fled in terror.

NARRATOR

leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost. At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived.

CRATCHIT

With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

SCROOGE

'You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?'

CRATCHIT

'If quite convenient, sir.'

SCROOGE

'It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?'

NARRATOR

The clerk smiled faintly.

SCROOGE

‘And yet you don’t think me ill-used, when I pay a day’s wages for no work.’

CRATCHIT

The clerk observed that it was ‘only once a year’.

SCROOGE

‘A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December!’ said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. ‘But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.’

CRATCHIT

The clerk promised that he would;

SCROOGE

and Scrooge walked out with a growl.

NARRATOR

The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times,

CRATCHIT

in honour of its being Christmas Eve,

NARRATOR

and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt,

CRATCHIT

to play at blindman’s-buff.

NARRATOR

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker’s-book, went home to bed.

*2

He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his

A

deceased

*2

partner.

SEVERALLY

They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be,

*3

that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there

SEVERALLY
when it was a young house,

*3
and forgotten the way out again.

SEVERALLY:
It was old enough now,
and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge.
The yard was so dark that even Scrooge,

SCROOGE
who knew its every stone,

A
was fain to grope with his hands.

NARRATOR
Now, it is a fact that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven years' dead partner that afternoon.

PERUSAL COPY ONLY
SCROOGE
And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change — not a knocker, but Marley's face.

ALL
(suddenly standing)
MARLEY'S FACE!
(They sit)

SEVERALLY
It had a dismal light about it.
It was not angry or ferocious,
but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look:
The hair was curiously stirred,
as if by breath
or hot air;
and, though the eyes were wide open,
they were perfectly motionless.

NARRATOR
That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face, rather than a part of its own expression.

SEVERALLY
As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon,
it was a knocker again.

SCROOGE

To say that he was not startled would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily and walked in.

NARRATOR

He did pause, before he shut the door and look cautiously behind it, but there was nothing on the back of the door, so he said

SCROOGE

‘Pooh, pooh!’

NARRATOR

and closed it with a

ALL

BANG!

(A series of echo-like stomps from feet in the front row, fading away)

SEVERALLY

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own.

SCROOGE

Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He walked across the hall, and up the stairs; slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

SEVERALLY

Half a dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn’t have lighted the stairway too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge’s candle. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it.

NARRATOR

You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the draw-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare;

(The company imitate horse clip-clops; harness and bits jingling)

A

which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a hearse going on before him in the gloom.

NARRATOR

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

SEVERALLY

sitting-room,
bedroom,
lumber-room.

NARRATOR

All as they should be.

SCROOGE

(lifting up members of the COMPANY and looking under them)

Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa:

SEVERALLY

a small fire in the grate;
spoon and basin ready;

A

and the little saucepan of gruel

B

(Scrooge had a cold in his head)

(SCROOGE sneezes)

A

upon the hob.

SCROOGE

(looking under people again)

Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown.

SEVERALLY

Old fire-guards,
old shoes,
two fish-baskets,
washing-stand on three legs,
and a poker.

NARRATOR

Quite satisfied, he closed his door,

(Echo-like stomps from the front row, again)

NARRATOR

and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. He put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel. It was a very low fire indeed. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth. The fireplace was an old one, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles — and yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came and swallowed up the whole. If each tile had been a blank at first, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

SCROOGE

'Humbug!'

NARRATOR

As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room.

SEVERALLY

It was with great astonishment, that
as he looked,
he saw
this bell
begin
to swing.

(The COMPANY begin to ring bells softly, then building)

A

It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly,
and so did every bell in the house.

SCROOGE

This might have lasted half a minute, but it seemed an hour.

NARRATOR

The bells ceased as they had begun...

ALL

TOGETHER!

(The bells stop)

NARRATOR

They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were
dragging a heavy chain over casks in the cellar.

SCROOGE

The cellar-door flew open with a

ALL

BOOM!

SEVERALLY

and then he heard the noise much louder,
on the floors below;
then
coming
up
the stairs;
then
coming
straight
towards
his
door.

SCROOGE

‘It’s humbug still! I won’t believe it.’

NARRATOR

Without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried

ALL

(shouting)

‘I know him; Marley’s Ghost!’

SEVERALLY

and fell again.
The same face:
the very same.
Marley in his
pigtail,
usual waistcoat,
tights and boots;
the tassels on the latter bristling,
like his pigtail,
and his coat-skirts,
and the hair upon his head.

A

The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made,

SCROOGE
for Scrooge observed it closely,

SEVERALLY: of cash-boxes,
keys,
padlocks,
ledgers,
deeds,
and heavy purses wrought in steel.

NARRATOR: Scrooge did not believe it even now. Though he saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin; he fought against his senses.

SCROOGE

‘How now!’, caustic and cold as ever. ‘What do you want with me?’

MARLEY

‘Much!’

NARRATOR

Marley’s voice, no doubt about it.

SCROOGE

‘Who are you?’

MARLEY

‘Ask me who I was.’

SCROOGE

‘You’re particular, for a shade. Who were you then?’

MARLEY

‘In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.’

SCROOGE

‘Can you — can you sit down?’

MARLEY

‘I can.’

SCROOGE

‘Do it, then.’

NARRATOR

Scrooge didn’t know whether a ghost might find himself in a condition to take a chair; but the ghost sat down as if he were quite used to it.

MARLEY

‘You don’t believe in me.’

SCROOGE

‘I don’t.’

MARLEY

‘Why do you doubt your senses?’

SCROOGE

‘Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheat. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There’s more of gravy than of grave about you!’

NARRATOR

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of keeping down his terror; for the spectre’s voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

SCROOGE

‘You see this toothpick?’

MARLEY

‘I do.’

SCROOGE

‘You are not looking at it.’

MARLEY

‘But I see it, notwithstanding.’

SCROOGE

‘Well! I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you! Humbug!’

NARRATOR

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge

SCROOGE

fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face. ‘Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?’

MARLEY

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

SCROOGE

‘I do, I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?’

MARLEY

‘It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world — oh, woe is me! — and witness what it cannot share!’

SCROOGE

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands. ‘You are fettered. Tell me why?’

MARLEY

‘I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.’

SCROOGE

Scrooge trembled more and more.

MARLEY

‘Would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!’

SCROOGE

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing. ‘Jacob, Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!’

MARLEY

‘I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, to other kinds of men. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house — mark me! — in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!’

SCROOGE

‘You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.’

MARLEY

‘Slow!’

SCROOGE

‘Seven years dead. You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years.’

NARRATOR

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

‘Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. My trade was but a drop of water in the ocean of my business!’

NARRATOR

It held up its chain at arm’s length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

MARLEY

‘Hear me! My time is nearly gone.’

SCROOGE

‘Don’t be hard upon me, Jacob! Pray!’

MARLEY

‘I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day.’

SCROOGE

It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge wiped the perspiration from his brow.

MARLEY

‘I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.’

SCROOGE

‘You were always a good friend to me. Thank ‘ee!’

MARLEY

‘You will be haunted by Three Spirits.’

SCROOGE

‘Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?’

MARLEY

‘It is.’

SCROOGE

‘I — I think I’d rather not.’

MARLEY

‘Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls One.’

SCROOGE

‘Couldn’t I take ‘em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?’

MARLEY

‘Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!’

SEVERALLY

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head. The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took,

SCROOGE

Scrooge became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds; sorrowful wailings.

NARRATOR

The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

SCROOGE

Scrooge followed to the window; desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

ALL

The air was

SEVERALLY

filled
with phantoms,
wandering
hither and
thither in restless haste,
moaning as they went.
Every one of them wore chains

MARLEY

like Marley’s Ghost;

*4

some few

SCROOGE

(they might be guilty governments)

*4

were linked together; none were free.

A

The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters,

and had lost the power for ever. ALL

(music: No. 4: Glad Tidings)

ALL
HARK, HARK WHAT NEWS THE ANGELS BRING!

WOMEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

MEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

WOMEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

MEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

ALL
GLAD TIDINGS OF A NEW-BORN KING!

QUARTET
WHO IS THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND,
IN WHOM WE MAY SALVATION FIND.
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

ALL
IN WHOM WE MAY SALVATION FIND.

THIS IS THE DAY, THE BLESSED MORN!

WOMEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

MEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

WOMEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

MEN
GLAD TIDINGS!

ALL
THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND WAS BORN

QUARTET
FOR WHY? BECAUSE 'T WAS FOR OUR SAKE
CHRIST DID OUR HUMAN NATURE TAKE.

ALL
CHRIST DID OUR HUMAN NATURE TAKE.

GLAD TIDINGS! WOMEN

GLAD TIDINGS! MEN

GLAD TIDINGS! WOMEN

GLAD TIDINGS! MEN

ALL
GLAD TIDINGS OF A NEW-BORN KING!

NARRATOR
The night became as it had been when he walked home. Scrooge

SCROOGE
closed the window, and examined the door

NARRATOR
by which the Ghost had entered.

SCROOGE
It was double-locked,

NARRATOR
as he had locked it with his own hands. He tried to say

SCROOGE
'Humb...!'

NARRATOR
but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone

SEVERALLY
or the fatigues of the day,
or his glimpse of the Invisible World,
or the dull conversation of the Ghost,

NARRATOR
or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without
undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

Stave 2: The First of the Three Spirits

NARRATOR Cont.
When Scrooge awoke,

(SOUND: bells chime 3/4s and six)

SEVERALLY
it was so dark that,

SEVERALLY Cont.

looking out of bed,
he could scarcely distinguish
the window
from the walls of his chamber.

NARRATOR

The chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour.

*5

To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from

A

six

*5

to

B

seven,

*5

and from

PERUSAL COPY ONLY

seven

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

*5

to

D

eight,

*5

and on up to twelve; then stopped.

ALL

Twelve.

NARRATOR

It was past two when he went to bed.

SEVERALLY

The clock was wrong.
An icicle must have got into the works.

ALL

Twelve.

SCROOGE

Why, it isn't possible that I can have slept through a whole day and into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon.'

Scrooge thought
NARRATOR

and thought,
and thought
it over
and over
and over
SEVERALLY

and could make nothing of it. The more he thought,
NARRATOR

The more perplexed he was;
A

and the more he endeavoured not to think,
NARRATOR

The more he thought.
B

Marley's Ghost bothered him exceedingly.
NARRATOR

Was it a dream
or not?
SEVERALLY
PERUSAL COPY ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

He remembered, on a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation.
NARRATOR

when the bell tolled one.
MARLEY

He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed and,
NARRATOR

considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven,
A

this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power.
NARRATOR

Ding, dong!
*6

A quarter past.
SCROOGE

Ding, dong!
*6

Half-past! SCROOGE

Ding, dong! *6

A quarter to it. SCROOGE

Ding, dong! *6

The hour itself and nothing else! SCROOGE

B
The hour bell now sounded with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy

ALL: ONE!

C
Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn.

(The 1ST SPIRIT enters quickly and comes up to stare, nose to nose, into SCROOGE's face)

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS
NARRATOR
The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand, and Scrooge, starting up, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

(The 1ST SPIRIT steps back and allows SCROOGE to survey it)

It was a strange figure — like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man. Its hair was white, and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it. It wore a tunic of the purest white, and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers.

SCROOGE
'Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?' asked Scrooge.

1ST SPIRIT
'I am.'

SCROOGE
The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

SCROOGE
'Who, and what are you?'

1ST SPIRIT
'I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.'

SCROOGE
 ‘Long Past?’

1st SPIRIT
 ‘No. Your past.’

SCROOGE
 He then made bold to inquire what business brought him there.

1st SPIRIT
 ‘Your welfare.’

SCROOGE
 ‘Much obliged, but I can’t help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end.’

1st SPIRIT
 ‘Your reclamation, then. Take heed.’

SCROOGE
 It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

1st SPIRIT
 ‘Rise, and walk with me.’

NARRATOR
 It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour

SEVERALLY
 were not adapted to pedestrian purposes;
 that bed was warm,
 and the thermometer a long way below freezing;
 that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap;

NARRATOR
 and that he had a cold upon him at that time.

(SCROOGE sneezes)

NARRATOR
 The grasp, though gentle as a woman’s hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but

SCROOGE
 finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped its robe in supplication. ‘I am mortal, and liable to fall.’

1st SPIRIT
 ‘Bear but a touch of my hand there,’

NARRATOR
 laying it upon his heart,

1st SPIRIT
 ‘and you shall be upheld in more than this.’

upon an open country road
NARRATOR

SEVERALLY
with fields on either hand.
The city had entirely vanished.
The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear
cold
winter day
with snow upon the ground.

SCROOGE
‘Good Heaven!’ said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. ‘I was
bred in this place. I was a boy here.’ He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in
the air, each one connected with

ALL
a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten.

(music: No. 5: Carol for the Nativity; the music plays under until lyric)

1st SPIRIT
‘Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?’

NARRATOR
Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that

SCROOGE
it was a pimple;

NARRATOR
and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

1st SPIRIT
‘You remember the way?’

SCROOGE
‘Remember it. I could walk it blindfold.’

1st SPIRIT
‘Strange to have forgotten it for so many years.’

NARRATOR
Some shaggy ponies were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who

BOYS
called to other boys!

NARRATOR
All these boys were in great spirits, and

BOYS
SHOUTED!

NARRATOR

to each other, until the broad fields were

ALL

so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed

NARRATOR

to hear it.

1st SPIRIT

‘These are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.’

NARRATOR

The travellers came on; and Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them.

SEVERALLY

Why did his cold eye glisten,
and his heart leap up
as they went past?

SEVERALLY Cont.

Why was he filled with gladness
when he heard them give each other

Merry Christmas!

BOYS

SEVERALLY

as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways?
What was merry Christmas to Scrooge?
Out upon merry Christmas.

NARRATOR

What good had it ever done him?

SOLO

THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT IN DECEMBER
NOR SNOW, NOR HAIL, NOR WINTER STORM
CAN HINDER US FOR TO REMEMBER
THE BABE WHO ON THIS NIGHT WAS BORN.

DUET

WITH SHEPHERDS WE ARE COME TO SEE
THIS LOVELY INFANT’S GLORIOUS CHARMS;
BORN OF A MAID, AS THE PROPHET SAID,
THE GOD OF LOVE IN MARY’S ARMS.

ALL

NO EARTHLY GIFTS CAN WE PRESENT HIM,
NO GOLD, NOR MYRRH NOR ODOURS SWEET;
BUT IF WITH HEARTS WE CAN CONTENT HIM,
WE HUMBL Y LAY THEM AT HIS FEET.

ALL Cont.

IT WAS PURE LOVE THAT FROM ABOVE
BROUGHT HIM TO SAVE US FROM ALL HARMS;
SO LET US SING AND WELCOME HIM,
THE GOD OF LOVE IN MARY'S ARMS.

DUET

FOUR THOUSAND YEARS SINCE THE CREATION
THE WORLD LAY GROANING UNDER SIN;
NO ONE COULD E'ER EXPECT SALVATION,
NO ONE TO HEAV'N COULD ENTER IN.

ALL

THE LORD OF ALL COMES TO A STALL,
AND TO ATTEND HIM SENDS FOR KINGS,
WHO BY A STAR ARE CALLED AFTER
TO SEE AND HEAR THOSE JOYFUL THINGS.

SOLO

TO SEE AND HEAR THOSE JOYFUL THINGS.

1st SPIRIT

'The school is not quite deserted. A solitary child is left there still.'

SCROOGE

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

NARRATOR

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, to a door at the back of a house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge

SCROOGE

wept

NARRATOR

to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

SEVERALLY

Not a latent echo in the house,
not a squeak and scuffle from the mice,
not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind,
not a sigh among the leafless boughs of the one despondent poplar,
no, not a clicking in the fire,

NARRATOR

but fell upon the heart of Scrooge and gave a freer passage to his tears.

(music: No. 6: Sir Roger de Coverley instrumental)

SEVERALLY

Suddenly a man, in foreign garments
with an axe stuck in his belt,

SEVERALLY Cont.

wonderfully real and distinct to look at,
stood outside the window,

SCROOGE

‘Why, it’s Ali Baba. It’s dear old honest Ali Baba. Yes, yes, I know. One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that.

NARRATOR

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character,

SCROOGE

‘Poor boy. I wish,’

NARRATOR

Scrooge muttered after drying his eyes with his cuff:

SCROOGE

‘but it’s too late now.’

1st SPIRIT

‘What is the matter?’ asked the Spirit.

SCROOGE

‘Nothing. Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that’s all.’

NARRATOR

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand.

1st SPIRIT

‘Let us see another Christmas.’

NARRATOR

Scrooge’s former self grew larger at the words, and the room became

SEVERALLY

a little darker and
more dirty.

NARRATOR

He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge

SCROOGE

looked at the Ghost, and

NARRATOR

with a mournful shaking of his head,

SCROOGE

glanced anxiously towards the door.

NARRATOR

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her

FAN

‘Dear, dear brother. I have come to bring you home, dear brother. To bring you home, home, home.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘Home, little Fan.’

FAN

‘Yes.’

NARRATOR

said the child, brimful of glee.

FAN

‘Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be. I was not afraid to ask him if you might come home; and he said yes, you should; and sent me to bring you. And we’re to be together all Christmas and have the merriest time in all the world.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘You are quite a woman, little Fan.’

NARRATOR

She

FAN

clapped her hands and laughed, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him.

NARRATOR

Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her. A terrible voice in the hall cried

HEADMASTER

‘Bring down Master Scrooge’s box, there.’

NARRATOR

and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. The children bade the schoolmaster good-bye right willingly; and drove gaily down the garden-sweep.

(Ghe HEADMASTER waves goodbye, then dabs at his eyes with a handkerchief before returning to his seat)

1st SPIRIT

‘Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. But she had a large heart.’

SCROOGE

‘So she had. You’re right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid.’

1st SPIRIT
‘She died a woman and had, as I think, children.’

SCROOGE
‘One child.’

1st SPIRIT
‘True. Your nephew.’

NARRATOR
Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly,

SCROOGE
‘Yes.’

NARRATOR
They were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city,

SEVERALLY
where carts and
coaches
battle
for the way,
and all the strife and tumult of a real city were

NARRATOR
Here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.
The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and

1st SPIRIT
asked Scrooge if he knew it.

SCROOGE
‘Know it. Was I apprenticed here?’

NARRATOR
They went in.

SCROOGE
At sight of an old gentleman, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement: ‘Why, it’s old Fezziwig. Bless his heart; it’s Fezziwig alive again.’

SEVERALLY
Old Fezziwig laid down his pen,
and looked up at the clock.
He rubbed his hands;
adjusted his capacious waistcoat;
laughed all over himself
and called out in a
comfortable,
oily,
rich,
fat

SEVERALLY Cont.
 jovial voice:

FEZZIWIG
 ‘Yo ho, there. Ebenezer. Dick.’

NARRATOR
 Scrooge’s former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-prentice.

SCROOGE
 ‘Dick Wilkins, to be sure. Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick. Dear, dear.’

FEZZIWIG
 ‘Yo ho, my boys. No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer. Let’s have the shutters up, before a man can say Jack Robinson.’

NARRATOR
 You wouldn’t believe how those two fellows went at it. They charged into the street with the shutters

ALL
 — one, two, three —

NARRATOR
 had them up in their places

ALL
 — four, five, six —

NARRATOR
 barred them and pinned then

ALL
 — seven, eight, nine —

NARRATOR
 and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

FEZZIWIG
 ‘Hilli-ho!’ cried old Fezziwig,

NARRATOR
 skipping down from the high desk with wonderful agility.

FEZZIWIG
 ‘Clear away, my lads, and let’s have lots of room here. Hilli-ho, Dick. Chirrup, Ebenezer.’

NARRATOR
 Clear away? It was done in a minute;

SEVERALLY

the floor was swept
 the lamps were trimmed
 fuel was heaped upon the fire;
 and the warehouse was as snug,
 and warm,
 and dry,
 and bright

NARRATOR

a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night. In came a fiddler and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it,

FIDDLER

and tuned like fifty stomach-aches.

(SOUND: a violin tunes sourly)

SEVERALLY

In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast
 substantial
 smile.

In came the three Misses Fezziwigs,
 beaming and lovable.

In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke

In came all the young men and women employed in the business.

In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker.

In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman.

In came the boy from over the way

NARRATOR

In they all came, one after another. Then the fiddler (an artful dog, mind, who knew his business) struck up

FIDDLER

Sir Roger de Coverley!'

ALL

Hurray!

(music: No. 6B: Sir Roger de Coverley instrumental)

(They dance as boisterously as possible; the NARRATOR speaks as they do so)

NARRATOR

Away they all went, twenty couples at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them.

(At the end of the dance)

NARRATOR

When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig cut — cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger and clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, 'Well done!'

FIDDLER

and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter,

NARRATOR

especially provided for that purpose. During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, but he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him.

1st SPIRIT

'A small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.'

SCROOGE

'Small?'

1st SPIRIT

'Why, is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?'

SCROOGE

'It isn't that. It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.'

NARRATOR

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

1st SPIRIT

'What is the matter?'

SCROOGE

'Nothing in particular.'

1st SPIRIT

'Something, I think.'

SCROOGE

'No. No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.'

1st SPIRIT

'My time grows short. Quick.'

NARRATOR

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect

SCROOGE

For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice.

NARRATOR

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a girl in whose eyes there were tears.

BELLE

‘It matters little,’

NARRATOR

she said, softly.

BELLE:

‘To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘What Idol has displaced you?’

BELLE

‘A golden one.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘This is the even-handed dealing of the world. There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth.’

BELLE

‘You fear the world too much. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.’

NARRATOR

She shook her head.

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘Am I?’

BELLE

‘Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘I was a boy.’

BELLE

‘Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I can release you.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘Have I ever sought release?’

BELLE

‘In words, no. Never.’

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘In what, then?’

BELLE

‘In a changed nature; in an altered spirit. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. Tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no.’

SCROOGE

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle

YOUNG SCROOGE

‘You think not.’

BELLE

‘I would gladly think otherwise if I could. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl — you who weigh everything by Gain? I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.’

SCROOGE

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

BELLE

‘You may — the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will — have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.’

NARRATOR

She left him,

(music: No. 7: The Old "Waits" Carol)

QUARTET

THE MOON SHINES BRIGHT
AND THE STARS GIVE A LIGHT
A LITTLE BEFORE IT IS DAY;
THE LORD OUR GOD HE CALLETH US
AND BIDS US AWAKE AND PRAY.

THE LIFE OF MAN IS BUT A SPAN,
AND CUT DOWN IN ITS FLOW’R:
WE’RE HERE TODAY, TOMORROW GONE,
THE CREATURES OF AN HOUR.

MY SONG IS DONE, I MUST BE GONE,
I CAN STAY NO LONGER HERE;
GOD BLESS YOU ALL, BOTH GREAT AND SMALL,
AND SEND YOU A JOYFUL NEW YEAR!

SCROOGE

and they parted. ‘Spirit, show me no more. Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?’

1st SPIRIT

‘One shadow more.’ exclaimed the Ghost.

SCROOGE

‘No more. No more. I don’t wish to see it. Show me no more.’

NARRATOR

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

SEVERALLY

They were in another scene and place;
a room, not very large or handsome
but full of comfort.
Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl,
so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same,
until he saw her, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter.

NARRATOR

The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there than Scrooge could count; and every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily;

SEVERALLY

But now a knocking at the door was heard
and such a rush immediately ensued to greet the father,
who came home laden with Christmas toys and presents.
Then the shouting
and the struggling,
and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter.
The scaling him with chairs for ladders
to dive into his pockets,
despoil him of brown-paper parcels,
hold on tight by his cravat,
hug him round his neck,
and kick his legs in irrepressible affection.

NARRATOR

They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so subsided.

SCROOGE

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

MAN

‘Belle,’

NARRATOR

said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile,

MAN

‘I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.’

OLDER BELLE

‘Who was it?’

MAN

‘Guess.’

OLDER BELLE

‘How can I? Tut, don’t I know? Mr Scrooge.’

MAN

‘Mr Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.’

SCROOGE

‘Spirit. remove me from this place.’

1st SPIRIT

‘I told you these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me.’

SCROOGE

Remove me. I cannot bear it.

NARRATOR

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

SCROOGE

‘Leave me. Take me back. Haunt me no longer.’

NARRATOR

He was conscious of being overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

(music: No. 7B: reprise The Old "Waits" Carol)

QUARTET

THE MOON SHINES BRIGHT
AND THE STARS GIVE A LIGHT
A LITTLE BEFORE IT IS DAY;
THE LORD OUR GOD HE CALLETH US
AND BIDS US AWAKE...

Stave 3: The Second of the Three Spirits

(SCROOGE is snoring more and more loudly and wakes himself up)

NARRATOR

Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One.

SCROOGE

He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention.

NARRATOR

He put every curtain aside with his own hands, and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For, he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise.

A

I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a broad field of appearances.

B

Nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

NARRATOR

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck

ALL

ONE!

NARRATOR

and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling.

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

(The COMPANY imitates the sound of a clock ticking)

SEVERALLY

Five minutes,
ten minutes,
a quarter of an hour went by
yet nothing came.

SCROOGE

All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it; and which,

C

being only light,

SCROOGE

was more alarming than a dozen ghosts.

*7

At last, however, he began to think —

NARRATOR

as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it

*7

— at last, I say, he began to think that the source of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room.

SCROOGE

This idea taking full possession of him, he got up and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

NARRATOR

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice

2nd SPIRIT

called him by his name, and bade him enter.

SCROOGE

He obeyed.

SEVERALLY

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were hung with living green. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light

A

and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's.

SEVERALLY

Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-checked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes,

ALL

and seething bowls of punch.

NARRATOR

In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see, who bore a glowing torch and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

2nd SPIRIT:

'Come in.' exclaimed the Ghost. 'Come in. and know me better, man.'

(music: No. 8: The Mistletoe Bough instrumental)

END OF ACT ONE

Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol
ACT II

SETTING: As before.

(Music: No. 9: Improvisation on Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child)

(The COMPANY gather while the music plays; lights down; in the dark, the NARRATOR gavels three times)

2nd SPIRIT

'Come in. Come in. and know me better, man.'

(Lights up)

NARRATOR

Scrooge entered.

SCROOGE

He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

2nd SPIRIT

'I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me.'

SCROOGE

Scrooge reverently did so.

SEVERALLY

It was clothed in one simple green robe, bordered with white fur.
Its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be concealed by any artifice.

*8

Its feet were also bare and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath,

SEVERALLY

set here
and there

*8

with shining icicles.

SEVERALLY

Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face,
its sparkling eye,
its open hand,
its cheery voice.

2nd SPIRIT

'You have never seen the like of me before?'

SCROOGE

'Never.'

2nd SPIRIT

‘Have never walked forth with the elder brothers of my family?’

SCROOGE

‘I don’t think I have. I am afraid I have not. Have you many brothers, Spirit?’

2nd SPIRIT

‘More than eighteen hundred.’

SCROOGE

‘A tremendous family to provide for. Spirit, conduct me where you will. Last night on compulsion, I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.’

2nd SPIRIT

‘Touch my robe.’

NARRATOR

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

SEVERALLY

Holly,
mistletoe,
red berries,
ivy,
turkeys,
geese,
game,
poultry,
brawn,
meat,
sausages,
oysters,
pies,
puddings,
fruit,
and punch,

PERUSAL COPY ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

NARRATOR

all vanished instantly.

(The lights go black)

ALL

Aw!

(The lights come back on)

NARRATOR

And they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where the people made a brisk kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement and from the tops of their houses,

BOYS

whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below.

NARRATOR

The people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee;

SEVERALLY

calling out to one another from the parapets,
 now and then exchanging a facetious snowball
 laughing heartily if it went right
 and not less heartily if it went wrong.
 The poulterers' shops were still half open,
 and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory.
 The Grocers', oh the Grocers', with perhaps two shutters down,
 or one;
 but through those gaps such glimpses.
 It was not alone that the scales made a merry sound,
 or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks,
 or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose,
 or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare,
 the almonds so extremely white,
 the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight,
 the other spices so delicious,
 or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their boxes,

SCROOGE

but the customers were all so hurried and eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and ran back to fetch them, in the best humour possible.

(Music: No. 10: Good Christian Men, Rejoice)

WOMEN

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE
 WITH HEART AND SOUL AND VOICE;
 GIVE YE HEED TO WHAT WE SAY:

MEN

NEWS! NEWS! JESUS CHRIST IS BORN TODAY:
 OX AND ASS BEFORE HIM BOW
 AND HE IS IN THE MANGER NOW.

ALL

CHRIST IS BORN TODAY!
 CHRIST IS BORN TODAY!

MEN

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE
 WITH HEART AND SOUL AND VOICE;
 NOW YE HEAR OF ENDLESS BLISS:

WOMEN

JOY! JOY! JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN FOR THIS!
 HE HATH OP'ED THE HEAV'NLY DOOR
 AND MAN IS BLESSED EVERMORE

ALL
CHRIST WAS BORN FOR THIS!
CHRIST WAS BORN FOR THIS!

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN, REJOICE
WITH HEART AND SOUL AND VOICE;
NOW YE NEED NOT FEAR THE GRAVE:
PEACE! PEACE! JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN TO SAVE!
CALLS YOU ONE AND CALLS YOU ALL,
TO GAIN HIS EVERLASTING HALL
CHRIST WAS BORN TODAY!
CHRIST WAS BORN TODAY!

NARRATOR

Once or twice when there were angry words between some who had jostled each other, the Spirit shed a few drops of water on them from his torch, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said,

A

it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day.

B

And so it was. God love it, so it was.

SCROOGE

‘Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?’

2nd SPIRIT

‘There is. My own.’

SCROOGE

‘Would it apply to any kind of person on this day?’

2nd SPIRIT

‘To any. To a poor one most.’

SCROOGE

‘Why to a poor one most?’

2nd SPIRIT

‘Because it needs it most.’

NARRATOR

It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost, that he could accommodate himself to any place with ease. He stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully as in any lofty hall. And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, that led him straight to Scrooge’s clerk’s;

2nd SPIRIT

on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit’s dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch.

SCROOGE

Think of that. Bob had but fifteen bob a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but

SCROOGE Cont.

fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Then up rose Mrs Cratchit,

NARRATOR

Cratchit's wife,

MRS. CRATCHIT

dressed out in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth,

BELINDA

assisted by Belinda Cratchit,

NARRATOR

second of the Cratchit daughters,

BELINDA

also brave in ribbons;

PETER

while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar

NARRATOR

(Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day)

PETER

into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired.

NARRATOR

And now two smaller Cratchits,

BOY

boy

GIRL

and girl,

NARRATOR

basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, danced about the table,

PETER

and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he

NARRATOR

(not proud, although his collars nearly choked him)

PETER

blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha warn’t as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour.’

BOY & GIRL

‘Here’s Martha, mother!’

NARRATOR

cried the two young Cratchits.

BOY & GIRL

‘Hurrah! There’s such a goose, Martha!’

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are’, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

MARTHA

‘We’d a deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, mother.’

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘Well. Never mind so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye.’

BOY and GIRL

‘No, no! There’s father coming. Hide, Martha, hide!’

NARRATOR

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame.

CRATCHIT

‘Why, where’s our Martha?’, looking round.

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘Not coming.’

CRATCHIT

‘Not coming? Not coming upon Christmas Day?’

NARRATOR

Martha came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘And how did little Tim behave?’ asked Mrs Cratchit, when Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart’s content.

CRATCHIT

‘As good as gold, and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped

CRATCHIT Cont.

the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.’

NARRATOR

Bob’s voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that

CRATCHIT

Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

NARRATOR

Back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs — as if they were capable of being made more shabby — compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer;

PETER

Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose.

NARRATOR

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds — and in truth it was something very like it in that house.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy hissing hot;

PETER

Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour;

BELINDA

Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce;

MARTHA

Martha dusted the hot plates;

CRATCHIT

Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table;

BOY and GIRL

the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and crammed spoons into their mouths,

NARRATOR

lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last, grace was said.

CRATCHITS

Amen.

MRS. CRATCHIT

It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but

PETER
when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth,

CRATCHIT
one murmur of delight arose all round the board,

NARRATOR
and even Tiny Tim, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried

TINY TIM
Hurrah!

(music: No. 11: The Boar's Head Carol; the 2nd SPIRIT leads the singing)

2nd SPIRIT
THE BOAR'S HEAD IN HAND BEAR I,
BEDECK'D WITH BAYS AND ROSEMARY;
AND I PRAY YOU, MY MASTERS, BE MERRY,
QUOT ESTIS IN CONVIVIO:

ALL:
CAPUT APRI DEFERO
REDENS LAUDES DOMINO.

PERUSAL COPY ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

(The 2nd SPIRIT selects someone to sing the next verse by touching them on the head with his torch)

A
THE BOAR'S HEAD, AS I UNDERSTAND,
IS THE FINEST DISH IN ALL THE LAND,
WHICH THUS BEDECK'D WITH A GAY GARLAND
LET US SERVIRE CANTICO:

ALL
CAPUT APRI DEFERO
REDENS LAUDES DOMINO

(The 2nd SPIRIT selects another singer)

B
OUR STEWARD HATH PROVIDED THIS
IN HONOUR OF THE KING OF BLISS,
WHICH ON THIS DAY TO BE SERVED IS,
IN REGINENSI ATRIO

ALL
CAPUT APRI DEFERO
REDENS LAUDES DOMINO

NARRATOR
There never was such a goose. Bob said

CRATCHIT

he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked.

NARRATOR

Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration.

CRATCHIT

But now, the Cratchits were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows. And now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda,

MRS. CRATCHIT

Mrs Cratchit left the room alone — too nervous to bear witnesses — to take the pudding up and bring it in. Suppose it should not be done enough?

CRATCHIT

Suppose it should break in turning out?

BOY and GIRL

Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the backyard, and stolen it?

NARRATOR

All sorts of horrors were supposed.

CRATCHIT

Hallo. A great deal of steam.

NARRATOR

The pudding was out of the copper.

MARTHA

A smell like a washing-day.

NARRATOR

That was the cloth.

BELINDA

A smell like an eating-house

PETER

and a pastrycook's

BELINDA

next door to each other,

PETER

with a laundress's next door to that.

NARRATOR

That was the pudding.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Mrs Cratchit entered — flushed, but smiling proudly — with the pudding,

BOY and GIRL

like a speckled cannon-ball,

so hard and firm,
CRATCHIT

MRS. CRATCHIT
blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy,

NARRATOR
and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top. Oh, a wonderful pudding.

(Music: No. 11B: The Boar's Head Carol, reprise)

ALL
CAPUT APRI DEFERO
REDENS LAUDES DOMINO

MRS. CRATCHIT
At last the dinner was all done,

MARTHA
the cloth was cleared,

PETER
the hearth swept,

BELINDA
and the fire made up.

CRATCHIT
The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect,

CRATCHITS
all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth;

NARRATOR
and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Two tumblers, and a custard-cup

NARRATOR
without a handle.

CRATCHIT
These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks. Then Bob proposed: 'A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.'

CRATCHITS: Which all the family re-echoed.

TIM
'God bless us every one.'

NARRATOR

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he dreaded that he might be taken from him.

SCROOGE

'Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.'

2nd SPIRIT

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

SCROOGE

'No, no. Oh, no, kind Spirit. say he will be spared.'

2nd SPIRIT

'If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.'

NARRATOR

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words, and was overcome with grief.

(music: No. 12: Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming)

PERUSA COPY ONLY
 PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

QUARTET
 LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING
 FROM TENDER STEM HATH SPRUNG!
 OF JESSE'S LINEAGE COMING
 AS MEN OF OLD HAVE SUNG.

IT CAME A FLOW'RET BRIGHT,
 AMID THE COLD OF WINTER
 WHEN HALF SPENT WAS THE NIGHT.

ISAIAH 'T WAS FORETOLD IT,
 THE ROSE I HAVE IN MIND,
 WITH MARY WE BEHOLD IT
 THE VIRGIN MOTHER KIND.

TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE ARIGHT,
 SHE BORE TO MEN A SAVIOUR,
 WHEN HALF SPENT WAS THE NIGHT.

2nd SPIRIT

'Man, if man you be in heart, will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die. Oh God, to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his brothers in the dust.'

SCROOGE

Scrooge bent before the Ghost's rebuke, and cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

CRATCHIT

'Mr Scrooge. I'll give you Mr Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast.'

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘The Founder of the Feast indeed. I wish I had him here. I’d give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he’d have a good appetite for it.’

CRATCHIT

‘My dear, the children. Christmas Day.’

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow.’

CRATCHIT

‘My dear,’ was Bob’s mild answer, ‘Christmas Day.’

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘I’ll drink his health for your sake and the Day’s, not for his. Long life to him. A merry Christmas and a happy new year. He’ll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt.’

NARRATOR

The children drank the toast after her.

CRATCHITS

Mr. Scrooge.

NARRATOR

They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit’s torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

SEVERALLY

And now,
 without a word of warning from the Ghost,
 they stood upon a bleak and desert moor,
 where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about,
 as though it were the burial-place of giants;
 and water spread itself wheresoever it listed,
 or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner;
 and nothing grew but moss
 and furze,
 and coarse rank grass.
 Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red,
 like a sullen eye,
 and frowning lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night.

SCROOGE

‘What place is this?’

2nd SPIRIT

‘A place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth. But they know me. See.’

NARRATOR

A light shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly they found a cheerful company assembled. An old, old man, in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them — it had been a very old song when he was a boy —

(music: No. 13: Torches)

SOLO 1

TORCHES, TORCHES, RUN WITH TORCHES
ALL THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM.
CHRIST IS BORN AND NOW LIES SLEEPING.
COME AND SING YOUR SONG TO HIM!

SOLO 1 & 2

(Sung in round)

TORCHES, TORCHES, RUN WITH TORCHES
ALL THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM.
CHRIST IS BORN AND NOW LIES SLEEPING.
COME AND SING YOUR SONG TO HIM!

SOLOS

(in round)

AH, RORO, RORO, MY BABY,
AH, RORO, MY LOVE, RORO;
SLEEP YOU WELL MY
HEART'S OWN DARLING,
WHILE WE SING YOU,
OUR RORO.

COMPANY

RO-RO, RO-RO

RO-RO, RO-RO

RO-RO

SING RO-RO.

ALL

(In round)

SING MY FRIENDS AND MAKE YOU MERRY;
JOY AND MIRTH AND JOY AGAIN.
LO, HE LIVES THE KING OF HEAVEN
NOW AND EVERMORE, AMEN.

(In unison)

LO, HE LIVES THE KING OF HEAVEN,
NOW AND EVER, EVERMORE, AMEN!

NARRATOR

It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness: it was a great surprise to Scrooge, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh.

FRED

‘Ha, ha.’ laughed Scrooge’s nephew. ‘Ha, ha, ha.’

NARRATOR

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge’s nephew, all I can say is, introduce him to me, and I’ll cultivate his acquaintance.

ALL including SCROOGE

‘Ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha, ha.’

FRED

‘He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live. He believed it too.’

NIECE

‘More shame for him, Fred.’

NARRATOR

Bless those women; they are always in earnest. She was very pretty, Scrooge’s niece:

FRED

Exceedingly pretty.

NARRATOR

With a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed

FRED

— as no doubt it was;

NARRATOR

and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw. Altogether she was what you would call

FRED

provoking, you know; but satisfactory. ‘He’s a comical old fellow,’ said Scrooge’s nephew, ‘that’s the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.’

NIECE

‘I’m sure he is very rich, Fred. At least you always tell me so.’

FRED

‘What of that, my dear? His wealth is of no use to him. He don’t do any good with it. He don’t make himself comfortable with it. He hasn’t the satisfaction of thinking — ha, ha, ha. — that he is ever going to benefit us with it.’

NIECE

‘I have no patience with him.’

WOMEN

Scrooge’s niece’s sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion. Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! Tsk!

FRED

‘Oh, I have. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he won’t dine with us. What’s the consequence? He don’t lose much of a dinner.’

NIECE

‘Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner.’

NARRATOR

Everybody else said the same, and they had just had dinner; and, with the dessert upon the

NARRATOR Cont.
table, were clustered round the fire, by lamplight.

FRED
'Well, I'm very glad to hear it, because I haven't great faith in these young housekeepers. What do you say, Topper?'

TOPPER
Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of Scrooge's niece's sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject.

WOMAN
Whereat Scrooge's niece's sister

2nd WOMAN
(Holding a rose)
the plump one with the lace tucker: not the one with the roses

WOMAN
blushed.

NIECE
'Do go on, Fred. He never finishes what he begins to say. He is such a ridiculous fellow.'

FRED
'I was only going to say that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. He may rail at Christmas, but he can't help thinking better of it if he finds me going there, year after year, and saying "Uncle Scrooge, how are you?" If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that's something.'

NARRATOR
After tea, they had some music, for they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it.

SCROOGE
Scrooge's niece played among other tunes a little air which had been familiar to the child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school. When this strain of music sounded, Scrooge softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated his own happiness with his own hands.

(music: No. 14: Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child)

QUARTET
LULLY, LULLAY, THOU LITTLE TINY CHILD;
BYE-BYE, LULLY, LULLAY.

SOP./ALT.
O SISTERS, TOO, HOW MAY WE DO
FOR TO PRESERVE THIS DAY
THIS POOR YOUNGLING,
FOR WHOM WE DO SING
BYE-BYE, LULLY, LULLAY?

QUARTET
 THAT WOE IS ME, POOR CHILD, FOR THEE!
 AND EVER MORN AND DAY,
 FOR THY PARTING NEITHER SAY NOR SING
 BYE-BYE, LULLY, LULLAY!

FRED
 But they didn't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits;

NIECE
 for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas.

NARRATOR
 Stop! There was first a game at blind-man's buff.

TOPPER
 Of course there was.

WOMAN
 And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots.

2nd WOMAN
 The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Wherever she went, there went he. He wouldn't catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him on purpose...

NARRATOR
 (as some of them did),

2nd WOMAN
 . . . he would have made a feint of endeavouring to seize you and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of the plump sister.

WOMAN
 She often cried out that it wasn't fair;

TOPPER
 and it really was not. But when at last, he caught her; when, in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape;

2nd WOMAN
 then his conduct was the most execrable; was vile, monstrous. No doubt she told him her opinion of it, when,

FRED
 another blind-man being in office,

2nd WOMAN
 they were so very confidential together,

TOPPER

behind the curtains.

NIECE

Scrooge's niece was not one of the blind-man's buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet.

SCROOGE

They all played, and so did Scrooge, for, wholly forgetting that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed quite right, too. 'Here is a new game,' said Scrooge. 'One half hour, Spirit, only one.'

FRED

It was a Game called Yes and No, where, Scrooge's nephew answering to their questions yes or no, it was elicited from him that he was thinking of

SEVERALLY

an animal,
a live animal,

NIECE

rather a disagreeable animal,

SEVERALLY

a savage animal,
an animal that growled
and grunted sometimes,
and talked sometimes,
and lived in London,
and walked about the streets,
and wasn't made a show of,
and wasn't led by anybody,
and didn't live in a menagerie,
and was never killed in a market,
and was not a horse,
or an ass,

SCROOGE

(repeating until 2nd WOMAN speaks)

or a tiger!

SEVERALLY

or a cow,
or a bull,

2nd WOMAN

or a tiger,

SCROOGE

(repeating until it is spoken)

or a pig!

SEVERALLY

or a dog,
or a pig,
or a cat,

2nd WOMAN

or a bear.

FRED

At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter;

WOMAN

At last the plump sister,

FRED

falling into a similar state,

WOMAN

cried out: 'I have found it out. I know what it is, Fred. I know what it is.'

FRED

'What is it?'

WOMAN

'It's your Uncle Scrooge.'

(Huge laughter from ALL)

NARRATOR

Admiration was universal,

2nd WOMAN

though some objected that the reply to 'Is it a bear' ought to have been 'Yes.'

FRED

'He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, "Uncle Scrooge."'

ALL

'Well. Uncle Scrooge.'

FRED

'A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, wherever he is. He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge.'

SCROOGE

Uncle Scrooge had become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech,

NARRATOR

but the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels. Much they saw, and far they went. The

NARRATOR Cont.

Spirit stood beside sick beds; on foreign lands; by struggling men; by poverty; in almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, he left his blessing. It was a long night, if it were only a night; looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

SCROOGE

'Are spirits' lives so short?'

2nd SPIRIT

'My life upon this globe, is very brief. It ends to-night.'

SCROOGE

'To-night?'

2nd SPIRIT

'To-night at midnight. Hark. The time is drawing near.'

(SOUND: chimes ring 3/4s past 11)

2nd SPIRIT

'Look here. Oh, Man. look here. Look, look, down here.'

SEVERALLY

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; a boy and a girl.

Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish;
but prostrate, too, in their humility.

Where graceful youth should have filled their features out,
a stale and shrivelled hand had pinched, and twisted them,
and pulled them into shreds.

Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared.

SCROOGE

'Spirit, are they yours?' Scrooge could say no more.

2nd SPIRIT

'They are Man's, and they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it. Slander those who tell it ye. And abide the end.'

SCROOGE

'Have they no refuge or resource?'

2nd SPIRIT

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

(music: No. 14b reprise Lullay)

QUARTET

THAT WOE IS ME, POOR CHILD, FOR THEE!
AND EVER MORN AND DAY,
FOR THY PARTING NEITHER SAY NOR SING
BYE-BYE, LULLY, LULLAY!

NARRATOR

The bell struck twelve.

(SOUND: one loud toll)

SCROOGE

As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he lifted up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

Stave 4: The Last of the Spirits

NARRATOR

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached.

SCROOGE

When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery. 'I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come.'

WHISPERED VOICE

(this is optionally mic'd with special effects applied)

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

SCROOGE

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

WHISPERED VOICE

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

SCROOGE

'Ghost of the Future, I fear you more than any spectre I have 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 you company. Will you not speak to me.'

WHISPERED VOICE

It gave him no reply. The hand pointed straight before them.

SCROOGE

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

WHISPERED VOICE

The Phantom moved away. Scrooge followed in its shadow, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along.

SEVERALLY

They scarcely seemed to enter the city;
but there they were,
in the heart of it,
amongst the merchants;
who chinked the money in their pockets,
and conversed
in groups,

SEVERALLY Cont.

and looked at their watches,
and trifled with their great gold seals;

SCROOGE

as Scrooge had seen them often.

1st MAN

‘No,’ said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, ‘I don’t know much about it, either way. I only know he’s dead.’

2nd MAN

‘When did he die?’ inquired another.

1st MAN

‘Last night, I believe.’

3rd MAN

‘Why, what was the matter with him?’ asked a third,

SCROOGE

taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box.

3rd MAN

‘I thought he’d never die.’

1st MAN

‘God knows,’ said the first, with a yawn.

4th MAN

‘What has he done with his money?’ asked a red-faced gentleman

1st MAN

‘I haven’t heard,’ said the man with the large chin, yawning again. ‘Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn’t left it to me. That’s all I know.’

SCROOGE

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

1st MAN

‘Upon my life, I don’t know of anybody to go to the funeral. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer.’

4th MAN

‘I don’t mind going if a lunch is provided, but I must be fed.’

SCROOGE

Another laugh.

MAN

‘Well, I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I’ll offer to go, if anybody else will. Bye, bye.’

SCROOGE

Scrooge looked towards the Spirit for an explanation.

WHISPERED VOICE

Its finger pointed.

SCROOGE

Scrooge listened again. He knew these men, also. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view.

(The next section is done very slowly)

5th MAN

‘How are you?’

6th MAN

‘How are you?’

5th MAN

‘Well. Old Scratch has got his own at last, hey?’

6th MAN

‘So I am told. Cold, isn’t it?’

5th MAN

‘Seasonable for Christmas time. You’re not a skater, I suppose?’

6th MAN

‘No. No. Never got the hang of it. Good morning.’

NARRATOR

Not another word. That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting.

SCROOGE

Scrooge looked about for his own image but he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes. They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town,

SEVERALLY

The ways were foul and narrow;
 the shops and houses wretched;
 the people half-naked,
 drunken,
 slipshod,
 ugly.
 Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools,
 disgorged
 their offences of
 smell,
 and dirt,
 and life,
 upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked

SCROOGE

with crime, with filth, and misery.

NARRATOR

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones.

OLD JOE

Sitting among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age, smoking his pipe.

SCROOGE

Scrooge

WHISPERED VOICE

and the Phantom

SCROOGE

came into the presence of this man,

WOMAN

just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered,

when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed

MAN IN FADED BLACK

by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them,

WOMEN

than they had been upon the recognition of each other.

SCROOGE

They all three burst into a laugh.

WOMAN

‘Look here, old Joe, here’s a chance. If we haven’t all three met here without meaning it.’

OLD JOE

‘You couldn’t have met in a better place. Stop till I shut the door. Ah. How it skreeks. There an’t such rusty metal in the place as its hinges,; and there’s no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, ha. We’re all suitable to our calling, we’re well matched.’

WOMAN

The charwoman threw her bundle on the floor and looking with a bold defiance at the other two. ‘What odds then, Mrs Dilber? Don’t stand staring as if you was afraid, woman. We’re not going to pick holes in each other’s coats, I suppose?’

2nd WOMAN and MAN IN FADED BLACK

‘No, indeed.’ said Mrs Dilber and the man together.

WOMAN

‘Who’s the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?’

2nd WOMAN

‘No, indeed,’ laughing.

WOMAN

‘If he wanted to keep them after he was dead, a wicked old screw, why wasn’t he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he’d have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying, gasping out his last there, alone by himself.’

2nd WOMAN

‘It’s a judgment on him.’

WOMAN

‘I wish it was a little heavier judgment. Open that bundle, old Joe. I’m not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it.’

MAN IN FADED BLACK

But the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, produced his plunder.

OLD JOE

It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve- buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. ‘That’s your account,’ said Joe, ‘and I wouldn’t give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who’s next?’

2nd WOMAN

Mrs Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots.

OLD JOE

‘I always give too much to ladies. That’s your account. If you asked me for another penny, I’d repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown.’

WOMAN

‘And now undo my bundle, Joe.’

SCROOGE

Joe dragged out a large roll of some dark stuff.

OLD JOE

‘What do you call this? Bed-curtains?’

WOMAN

‘Ah. Bed-curtains!’

OLD JOE

‘You don’t mean to say you took them down, rings and all, with him lying there?’

WOMAN

‘Yes I do. Why not?’

OLD JOE

‘You were born to make your fortune.’

WOMAN

‘I shan’t hold my hand, for the sake of such a man as he was, I promise you. Don’t drop that oil upon the blankets, now.’

OLD JOE

‘His blankets?’

WOMAN

‘Whose else’s do you think? He isn’t likely to take cold without them, I dare say.’

OLD JOE

‘I hope he didn’t die of any thing catching. Eh?’

WOMAN

‘I an’t so fond of his company I’d loiter about him if he did. You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won’t find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. They’d have wasted it, if it hadn’t been for me.’

OLD JOE

‘What do you call wasting of it?’

WOMAN

‘Putting it on him to be buried in. Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. Ha, ha! This is the end of it, you see. He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead. Ha, ha, ha!’

SCROOGE

Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. ‘Spirit, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. Merciful Heaven, if there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man’s death, show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you.’

WHISPERED VOICE

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing;

SCROOGE

a room where a mother and her children were. She walked up and down; started at every sound; looked out the window; glanced at the clock.

CAROLINE

At length, she hurried to the door, and met her husband;

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND

a man whose face was careworn and depressed,

CAROLINE

though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now;

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND

a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress.

CAROLINE
‘Is it good,’ she said, ‘or bad?’ — to help him.

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND
‘Bad.’

CAROLINE
‘We are quite ruined?’

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND
‘No. There is hope yet, Caroline.’

CAROLINE
‘If he relents, there is. Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened.’

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND
‘He is past relenting. He is dead.’

(He starts to laugh and she squeals with delight and claps her hands)

SCROOGE
She prayed forgiveness the next moment, but the first was the emotion of her heart.

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND
‘What the half-drunken woman told me last night was quite true. He was dying, then.’

CAROLINE
‘To whom will our debt be transferred?’

CAROLINE’S HUSBAND
‘I don’t know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money. We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline.’

(Music: No. 14c: Sir Roger de Coverley, short; they dance with joy)

SCROOGE
The only emotion caused by the event was one of pleasure. ‘Let me see some tenderness connected with a death,’ said Scrooge.

NARRATOR
The Ghost conducted him through streets; and as they went along, Scrooge looked to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen.

SCROOGE
They entered poor Bob Cratchit’s house. Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits as still as statues in one corner, looking at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet.

PETER
‘And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them.’

SCROOGE
The boy must have read the words out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

MRS. CRATCHIT

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face. ‘The colour hurts my eyes,’ she said. ‘They’re better now again. I wouldn’t show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time.’

PETER

‘Past it rather,’ shutting up his book. ‘But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.’

SCROOGE

They were quiet again. She said, in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘I have known him walk with — I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.’

PETER

‘And so have I. Often.’

SCROOGE

So had all.

MRS. CRATCHI

‘But he was very light to carry,’ intent upon her work,’ and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble. And there is your father at the door.’

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

SCROOGE

Bob was very cheerful, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs Cratchit and the girls.

MRS. CRATCHIT

‘You went to-day, then, Robert?’ said his wife.

CRATCHIT

‘Yes, my dear. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child. My little child.’

SCROOGE

He broke down all at once. He couldn’t help it.

(music: No. 14d: Lully, Lullay, 2nd reprise)

SOPRANO

LULLY, LULLAY, THOU LITTLE TINY CHILD;
BYE-BYE...

CRATCHIT

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still.

SCROOGE

Bob told them of the kindness of Mr Scrooge’s nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little —

CRATCHIT
 ‘just a little down, you know.’

SCROOGE
 — inquired what had happened to distress him.

CRATCHIT
 ‘On which, for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him.

FRED
 ‘I am heartily sorry for it, Mr Cratchit,’ he said, ‘and heartily sorry for your good wife.’

CRATCHIT
 By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don’t know.’

MRS. CRATCHIT
 ‘Knew what, my dear?’

CRATCHIT
 ‘Why, that you were a good wife.’

PETER
 ‘Everybody knows that.’

CRATCHIT
 ‘Very well observed, my boy. ‘Heartily sorry,’ he said, ‘for your good wife.

FRED
 ‘If I can be of service to you in any way,’

CRATCHIT
 he said, giving me his card,

FRED
 ‘that’s where I live. Pray come to me.’

CRATCHIT
 ‘Now, it wasn’t for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.’

MRS. CRATCHIT
 ‘I’m sure he’s a good soul.’

CRATCHIT
 ‘You would be surer of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn’t be at all surprised — mark what I say — if he got Peter a better situation.’

MRS. CRATCHIT
 Only hear that, Peter!’

BELINDA
 ‘And then, Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.’

PETER

‘Get along with you!’

CRATCHIT

‘It’s just as likely as not, one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and when ever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim — shall we? — or this first parting that there was among us.’

SCROOGE

‘Never, father.’ cried they all.

CRATCHIT

‘And I know, I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.’

SCROOGE

‘No, never, father.’ they all cried again.

CRATCHIT

‘I am very happy. I am very happy.’

SCROOGE

‘Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. Tell me what man that was who died.’

NARRATOR

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself.

SCROOGE

‘This is where my place of occupation is. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come.’

WHISPERED VOICE

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

SCROOGE

‘The house is yonder. Why do you point away?’

WHISPERED VOICE

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

SCROOGE

A churchyard. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation’s death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place.

WHISPERED VOICE

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to one.

SCROOGE

‘Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?’

WHISPERED VOICE

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

SCROOGE

‘Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead, but if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me.’

WHISPERED VOICE

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

NARRATOR

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave,

ALL

(standing and raising voices to a shout) Eb-en-ezer SCROOGE!

SCROOGE

‘Am I that man who lay upon the bed?’

WHISPERED VOICE

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

SCROOGE

‘No, Spirit. Oh no, no.’

WHISPERED VOICE

The finger still was there.

SCROOGE

‘Spirit. hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?’

NARRATOR

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

SCROOGE

‘Good Spirit, your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life.’

NARRATOR

The kind hand trembled.

SCROOGE

‘I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone.’

NARRATOR

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty. Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate aye reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom’s hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into

a bedpost.
SCROOGE

Stave 5: The End of It

NARRATOR
Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

SCROOGE
'I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me! Oh, Jacob Marley, Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees!'

NARRATOR
He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call.

SCROOGE
'They are not torn down! They are not torn down, rings and all. They are here — I am here — the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be! I know they will!'

(music: No. 15: Hark, What Mean Those Holy Voices)

PERUSAL COPY ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS
ALL
HARK! WHAT MEAN THOSE HOLY VOICES,
SWEETLY SOUNDING THROUGH THE SKIES?
LO! TH'ANGELIC HOST REJOICES!
HEAV'NLY HALLELUJAHS RISE.
LO! TH'ANGELIC HOST REJOICES!
HEAV'NLY HALLELUJAHS RISE.

(The NARRATOR and SCROOGE speak over the second verse)

LISTEN TO THE WONDROUS STORY
WHICH THEY CHANT IN HYMNS OF JOY —
GLORY IN THE HIGHEST, GLORY!
GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH!
GLORY IN THE HIGHEST, GLORY!
GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH!

NARRATOR
His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

SCROOGE
'I don't know what to do. I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world!

(Music ends)

SCROOGE Cont.

Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!

NARRATOR

He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.

SCROOGE

‘There’s the saucepan that the gruel was in. There’s the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered. There’s the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present, sat. There’s the window where I saw the wandering Spirits. It’s all right, it’s all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!’

NARRATOR

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs.

SCROOGE

‘I don’t know what day of the month it is. I don’t know how long I’ve been among the Spirits. I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!’

NARRATOR

He was checked in his transports by the churches ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard.

PERUSAL COPY ONLY

(music: No. 16: Sing Noel)
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

*10

Clash,

*11

clang,

*12

hammer;

*13

ding,

*14

dong,

*15

bell. Bell,

*14

dong,

*13

ding;

*12

hammer,

clang, *11

clash. *10

Oh, glorious, glorious!
NARRATOR

ALL
SING NOEL!
I CAN NEVER CEASE MY SINGING
WHILE THE AIR WITH JOY IS RINGING,
ON THIS HAPPY HOLIDAY: SING NOEL!
ON THIS HAPPY HOLIDAY.

MEN
THERE WE LAY UPON THE GROUND,

WOMEN
NOEL!

MEN
WATCHING O'ER OUR FLOCKS OF SHEEP.
ALL AMAZED TO HEAR THE SOUND.

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS
WOMEN
NOEL!

MEN
THAT AWAKENED UP FROM SLEEP.

ALL
ADAM'S FALL, WHEN HE ATE THE FRUIT FORBIDDEN
DEEPLY IN OUR HEARTS WAS HIDDEN

ALL Cont.
AND THROUGH HIM WE SINNÉD ALL.
SING NOEL! AND THROUGH HIM WE SINNÉD ALL.

MEN
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

WOMEN
NOEL!

MEN
SHONE THE SUN AS CLEAR AS DAY,
AND APPEAR'D AN ANGEL BRIGHT

WOMEN
NOEL!

MEN
WHO DID POINT US TO THE WAY.

ALL
SO WE RAN STRAIGHT TO SEEK THE LOWLY
MANGER, LEAVING ALL OUR FLOCKS IN DANGER
TO BEHOLD THE SON OF MAN,
SING NOEL! TO BEHOLD THE SON OF MAN.

NARRATOR
Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his head.

SEVERALLY

No fog,
no mist;
clear,
bright,
jovial,
stirring,
cold;
cold,
piping for the blood to dance to;
Golden sunlight;
Heavenly sky;
sweet fresh air;
merry bells.

PERUSAL COPY ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

NARRATOR
Oh, glorious! Glorious!

SCROOGE
'What's to-day?'

BOY
calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes. 'Eh?'

SCROOGE
'What's to-day, my fine fellow?'

BOY
'To-day? Christmas Day.'

SCROOGE
'It's Christmas Day. I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!'

BOY
'Hallo.'

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

BOY

‘I should hope I did.’

SCROOGE

‘An intelligent boy. A remarkable boy. Do you know whether they’ve sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there — Not the little prize Turkey: the big one?’

BOY

‘What, the one as big as me?’

SCROOGE

‘What a delightful boy! It’s a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!’

BOY

‘It’s hanging there now.’

SCROOGE

‘Is it? Go and buy it.’

BOY

‘Walk-er!’

SCROOGE:

‘No, no, I am in earnest! Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here. Come back with the man, and I’ll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I’ll give you half-a-crown.’

PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR FOR RIGHTS

NARRATOR

The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand at a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

SCROOGE

‘I’ll send it to Bob Cratchit’s. It’s twice the size of Tiny Tim. There was never made such a joke made as sending it to Bob’s will be.’

NARRATOR

The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down-stairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer’s man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocker caught his eye.

SCROOGE

‘I scarcely ever looked at it before. What an honest expression it has on its face. It’s a wonderful knocker.’

NARRATOR

The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried. The people were by this time pouring forth, and

SCROOGE

walking with his hands behind him,

NARRATOR

Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said,

SEVERALLY

‘Good morning, sir.
A merry Christmas to you.’

SCROOGE

Of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

NARRATOR

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said,

MAN

‘Scrooge and Marley’s, I believe.’

SCROOGE

It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

SCROOGE

‘My dear sir,’

MAN

quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands.

SCROOGE

How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir.’

MAN

‘Mr. Scrooge?’

SCROOGE

‘Yes. That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness. . .?’

MAN

— here Scrooge whispered in his ear. ‘Lord bless me! My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?’

SCROOGE

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

MAN

‘My dear sir, I don’t know what to say to such munificence.’

SCROOGE

‘Don’t say anything, please. Come and see me. Will you come and see me?’

MAN

‘I will!’ cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

SCROOGE

‘Thank you. I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you.’

NARRATOR

In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew’s house.

SCROOGE

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it: ‘Is your master at home, my dear?’

GIRL

said Scrooge to the girl.

SCROOGE

Nice girl. Very.

GIRL

‘Yes, sir.’

SCROOGE

‘Where is he, my love?’

GIRL

‘He’s in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I’ll show you up-stairs, if you please.’

SCROOGE

‘Thank you. He knows me. I’ll go in here, my dear.’

NARRATOR

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door.

NIECE

They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array);

FRED

for these young housekeepers are always nervous and like to see that everything is right.

SCROOGE

‘Fred?’

NIECE

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started. Scrooge had forgotten about her sitting in the corner with the footstool, or he wouldn’t have done it, on any account.

FRED

‘Why, bless my soul. Who’s that?’

SCROOGE

‘It’s I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?’

FRED

Let him in. It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off.

SCROOGE

He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when he came. So did the plump sister when she came. So did every one when they came. Wonderful party,

TOPPER

wonderful games,

FRED

wonderful unanimity,

NIECE

wonderful happiness.

SEVERALLY

But he was early at the office next morning.
Oh, he was early there.
If he could only be there first,
and catch Bob Cratchit coming late.

SCROOGE

That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

SEVERALLY

And he did it;
yes, he did.
The clock struck nine.
No Bob.
A quarter past.
No Bob.
He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time.
Scrooge sat with his door wide open,

SCROOGE

that he might see him come in.

CRATCHIT

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

SCROOGE

'Hallo?'

NARRATOR

growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it.

SCROOGE

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

CRATCHIT

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

SCROOGE

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

CRATCHIT

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

SCROOGE

‘Now, I’ll tell you what, my friend. I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore,’

CRATCHIT

leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back.

SCROOGE

‘and therefore I am about to — raise your salary.’

CRATCHIT

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, calling for help and a strait-coat.

SCROOGE

‘A merry Christmas, Bob. A merrier Christmas, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year. I’ll raise your salary, and assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob. Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit.’

NARRATOR

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim,

SCROOGE

who did not die,

NARRATOR

he was a second father.

A

He became as good a friend,

CRATCHIT

as good a master,

SEVERALLY

and as good a man,
as the good old city knew, or

NARRATOR

any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world.

SEVERALLY

Some people laughed to see the alteration in him,

SEVERALLY Cont.

but he little heeded them;
for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe,

SCROOGE

for good,

SEVERALLY

at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset;
His own heart laughed:

SCROOGE

and that was quite enough for him.

NARRATOR

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us,

ALL

and all of us!

NARRATOR

And so, as Tiny Tim observed,

God Bless Us, Every One!

(Music: No. 17: The Gloucestershire Wassail)

(Lights down and up; curtain call; after bows:)

QUARTET

OH, MISTRESS, AT YOUR DOOR, OUR WASSAIL BEGINS.
PRAY, OPEN THE DOOR AND LET US COME IN,
WITH OUR WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL,
AND JOY COME TO OUR JOLLY WASSAIL!

ALL

COME YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS, I PRAY YOU DRAW NEAR;
COME FILL UP OUR BOWL WITH SOME CIDER OR BEER,
WITH OUR WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL,
SOME CIDER OR BEER WITH OUR JOLLY WASSAIL.

(The COMPANY begin to exit)

I WISH YOU A BLESSING AND A LONG TIME TO LIVE,
BECAUSE YOU'RE SO FREE AND SO WILLING TO GIVE
TO OUR WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL, WASSAIL
SO WILLING TO GIVE TO OUR JOLLY WASSAIL.

(The stage is empty and the house lights come on)

THE END