

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

adapted from the Charles Dickens' story by Paul Stebbings and Phil Smith.

Actor 1: plays Scrooge

Actor 2: plays Belle, Carol singer, Ghost, Mrs Cratchit Mrs Fred, Robber.

Actor3: plays Ghost of Christmas Past, Ghost of Christmas Present, Women Robber, Ghost Carol singer.

Actor 4: plays Fred, Marley, Charity Gentlewoman, O'Flynn, Ghost, Carol singer, Mr Fezziwig, Robber.

Actor 5: plays Bob Cratchit, Ghost, Carol Singer, Child/Doll, Mrs Fezziwig, Grandad, Robber.

Musician also plays tenant, Ghost and Carol singer.

ACT ONE

The cast gather singing a Carol muffled against the winter cold – they are poor and bedraggled without being beggars. They stand stage left. BOB CRATCHIT breaks away from the singers with the puppet of Tiny Tim, he has a crutch. Bob unwraps a present, it is a large book which he opens. (Traditional Carol: In the Bleak Mid Winter. Sung by all).

BOB CRATCHIT: A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. Chapter One.

CAROL SINGERS: Marley was dead.

BOB: There was no doubt about that.

CAROLER: As dead as a door nail.

(Holding up a nail).

BOB: Though why a door nail should be more dead than any other sort of nail I do not know.

CAROLERS: Marley was dead.

BOB: We know, we know. Marley died seven years ago. His partner, Scrooge, (Scrooge enters) never painted out old Marley's name and there it stood for years on the office door:

CAROLERS: Scrooge and Marley.

SCROOGE: Scrooge, Marley. Marley, Scrooge its all the same to me. Besides a new sign would be expensive.

CAROLERS: (Sigh and shake heads the start singing Carol again).

SCROOGE: (Lifts window, singing gets louder) Shut up! (He throws bucket of water at singers).

BOB: Scrooge was a hard man.

CAROLERS: As hard as stone!

BOB: He was a squeezing, wrenching, clutching secret, self-contained man – friendless and alone. The coldness inside him froze his old face. His eyes were red, his lips were blue. He carried his coldness with him wherever he went. He iced his office in the summer and at Christmas it was just as cold.

SCROOGE: (Counting piles of coin) Oh my little shining darlings. Pounds, shillings and pence was there ever such sense!

(Putting money away) Into the safe my lovelies. Safe. How my fingers tingle as at a fire! (Shuts safe).

CAROLERS: He passes through life like a cold shiver.

BOB: See him edge his way along the crowded paths of life (the audience), warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

SCROOGE: (To audience as he forces through audience) Out of my way, I have business to attend to. Have you no work to go to that you loiter around the streets?

Away, parasites! It is my taxes that purchase your leisure. Move along, I say.

You. What's your name? (Whatever answer) I thought so. You owe me money.

(He hands a letter to a member of the audience saying): That is my final demand, payment of the debt by the New Year or the bailiffs will seize your property and throw you onto the street. Good night. I'll cut back though the graveyard, less people and therefore more agreeable. (He walks back to his "office" on stage)

SCROOGE: Cratchit! Cratchit! Where are you its almost eight o'clock!

If you are late! (As the clock strikes eight Cratchit rushes on and just makes it in time).

BOB CRATCHIT sings: Happy – ah – Good morning, Sir.

SCROOGE: Get to work! (Flings ledger at his Clerk). I don't see what is good about this or any other morning. (Scrooge counts and Cratchit enters figures then coughs, Scrooge ignores him, coughs again, Scrooge ignores him, then his cough for attention becomes tubercular and he cannot help himself having a coughing fit from which he gradually recovers).

SCROOGE: What is it now, Cratchit?

CRATCHIT: It's so cold, Sir, I can hardly work. Mr Scrooge, in your great generosity could you spare me a few coals for my empty fireplace?

SCROOGE: No I could not spare you anything. And if you take time off work, Cratchit, to come here with your exorbitant demands, then you and I must part company.

CRATCHIT: Sorry, Sir.

SCROOGE: Let me hear one more sound from you and I'll give you a surprise Christmas present: Unemployment!

(Cratchit shivers and Sings:

Who would be a clerk

Working in the dark

Even a dog is not afraid to bark

A clerk must hide his passion and his pride

All for the sake of a crust for the family

Who would be a clerk?

A humble much too terrified to mumble clerk!

(FRED appears at the door and knocks).

SCROOGE: (Harsh, grating) Cratchit! - Answer that door and stop whimpering. It distracts me from my calculations.

FRED: A merry Christmas Uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE: Bah, Humbug.

FRED: What? Christmas humbug? You cannot mean Christmas is a humbug?

SCROOGE: I mean it, I mean it! What right have you to be so happy? You're poor enough!

FRED: And what right have you to be so sad? You're rich enough! (Cratchit laughs – then is caught by Scrooge and coughs into silence, Fred slaps him on the back)

SCROOGE: Stop that the two of you, this is my office!

FRED: It is Christmas Eve, Uncle, don't be cross.

SCROOGE: Don't be cross uncle! But I live in w world of fools! Merry Christmas

Uncle, God save you uncle. It is not I that need saving. I do well enough on my own.

You are the penniless fool who needs saving! What is Christmas time but a time

to pay bills without money? A time to realise that you are one year older and not

an hour richer. If I had my way every idiot who goes around with "Merry Christmas"

on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly

through his heart!

FRED: Uncle Scrooge!

SCROOGE: I mean it! You keep Christmas your way and let me keep it

mine.

FRED: But you don't keep it!

SCROOGE: Let me leave it alone then! Besides, much good has Christmas ever

done you!

FRED: Good? I have always thought of this season as the best time of the year. A

warm and giving season. And although Christmas has never put a scrap of gold in

my pocket I believe it has done me good, And I say, I shout, I sing "God Bless

Christmas!"

BOB and FRED sing: God Bless you merry gentlemen let nothing you dismay.

SCROOGE: Stop it! Stop it! I will not have music in my office, especially at

Christmas!

BOB: Sorry Sir, I was only ... (starts to cough).

SCROOGE: Another word from you and you will celebrate Christmas without

employment. (To Fred) You are such a powerful speaker, nephew, I wonder you

don't go into parliament.

FRED: Uncle come to dinner tomorrow.

SCROOGE: Why?

FRED: You have never met my wife!

SCROOGE: Why did you ever marry?

FRED: Because I fell in love.
 SCROOGE: (Mocking) Because I fell in love! What has love to do with it?
 FRED: With what?
 SCROOGE: With getting on in the world. With making money!
 FRED: Nothing. Nothing at all. But come to dinner anyway.
 SCROOGE: Good afternoon.
 FRED: Uncle, can we not be friends?
 SCROOGE: Good afternoon.
 FRED: I am sorry to find you so resolute against me, but I will not quarrel with you. I came here in honour of the day and I mean to keep my Christmas humour to the end. Merry Christmas Uncle Scrooge!
 SCROOGE: There's the door. Open it Cratchit.
 FRED: Merry Christmas to you, Mr Cratchit.
 BOB: Thank you, Sir. Merry-
 FRED: (Outside) And a happy new year!
 SCROOGE: Cratchit! There's another one. Bob Cratchit, my clerk, fifteen shillings a week and a wife to feed.
 BOB: And Tiny Tim.
 SCROOGE: Tiny What?
 CRATCHIT: My boy, Sir.
 SCROOGE: Even worse! All this talk of families and Christmas its enough to drive a sane man mad! (Three ladies knock at the door).
 SCROOGE: Cratchit! - Answer that door and stop whimpering. It distracts me from my calculations.
 CRATCHIT: Yes, Sir.
 GENTLE WOMEN: Merry Christmas.
 CRATCHIT: Sshh. (Whispers and looks back in terror) And a Merry Christmas to you too. Three ladies to see you.
 SCROOGE: (Mutters) Let's hope they owe me money. (Loud) Come in.
 GENTLEWOMAN ONE: Scrooge and Marley.
 GENTLEWOMAN TWO (man): Have we 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.
 GENTLEWOMAN ONE: And we have no doubt his generosity is well represented by his surviving partner.
 GENTLEWOMAN THREE: We are representatives of the Society for the Relief of Poverty.
 SCROOGE: Are you indeed? (He goes back to his desk and works).
 GENTLEWOMAN 2: The Ragged Children's Clothing Society.
 GENTLEWOMAN 1: The Relief of Starvation in City Streets.
 GENTLEWOMAN 2: The Gentlewoman's Gift of simple food to the-

ALL 3: - deserving Poor
 SCROOGE: (Still at work). Humbug!
 GENTLEWOMAN 3: At this festive season, Mr Scrooge, it is Mr Scrooge is it not?
 SCROOGE: Yes, it's Scrooge.
 GENTLEWOMAN 1: Mr Marley is deceased.
 SCROOGE: (Businesslike) Dead.
 GENTLEMAN 3: Sadly deceased.
 GENTLEWOMAN 2: At this season of the year, Mr Marley. (Kicked) Scrooge. It is more than usually desirable to GIVE (Scrooge gives a jump as if punched) some slight provision to the poor and homeless.
 ALL: The poor, who suffer greatly at the present time. (Operatic emotion).
 SCROOGE: Poor? Poor people?
 GENTLEWOMAN 1: Yes, Mr Scrooge.
 SCROOGE: Beggars?
 GENTLEWOMAN 3: Alas, yes, Mr Scrooge.
 SCROOGE: Are there no prisons?
 GENTLEWOMAN 2: There are many prisons, Sir.
 SCROOGE: And workhouses, where the so-called poor are forced to work for their bread, do they still in operate?
 GENTLEWOMAN 1: The workhouses remain.
 GENTLEWOMAN 3: We wish we could say they did not remain.
 SCROOGE: And the Law against begging, is it in full vigour? And are there no whips cracking or treadmills turning nicely?
 GENTLEWOMAN 1 & 2 & 3: All working, Sir.
 SCROOGE: Oh I'm so very glad to hear it. I was afraid from what you said that something had gone wrong with our admirable institutions to punish the Poor.
 GENTLEMAN 2: (Scrooge puts his money away). What shall we put you down for?
 SCROOGE: Nothing!
 GENTLEWOMAN 3: Ah an anonymous gift.
 GENTLEWOMAN 1 & 2 & 3: We understand.
 SCROOGE: Then understand that I wish to be left alone. I do not make merry at Christmas and I can't afford to let idle people make merry. I support the Workhouse, the whip, and the prisons. They cost enough. Let those who are poor use such luxuries!
 GENTLEWOMAN 1: Many would rather die, Sir, then go to the workhouse.
 SCROOGE: Well, let them die! Why not? Decrease the surplus population, it's not my business if they would rather die. Its enough for a man to understand his own business and mine occupies me continually. Good afternoon ladies.
 GENTLEWOMAN 2: Merry-

SCROOGE: Get out!
 CRATCHIT: (Showing them out and whispers) Merry Christmas. And here's a halfpenny. Its all I can spare, I would love to give more but what with a family to feed and-
 SCROOGE: What's going on? Parasites! Vermin! Out! (To Bob). I suppose you will be wanting all day off tomorrow?
 CRATCHIT: If its convenient, Sir.
 SCROOGE: It is not convenient. I am troubled. A day's pay for no work does trouble me, having my pocket picked and my wallet ripped from my grasp every December the 25th does indeed trouble me.
 CRATCHIT: I am sorry, sir, but it is the custom.
 SCROOGE: Oh take your blessed day off but be here all the earlier on the following day. I am a victim, don't you understand with your little clerk's brain? I am a victim of a most monstrous humbug! Christmas! Wah!
 CRATCHIT: Thank you, Sir, good night and a merry er very cold night it is too.
 SCROOGE: Be off with you. (Cratchit runs off) I'm going home with some light reading, my bank ledgers!
 CRATCHIT: (Out of door so Scrooge cannot hear & wrapped in scarf) Yoo hoo, its Christmas!
 CAROLERS: Sing tradional carol: GOOD KING WENCLESLAS.
 (Scrooge puts on his coat and takes his ledger, rubs and kisses it and sets off – the scene changed as the carol is sung, he then shoos them out of the way and they scatter).
 SCROOGE: Thirteen Grey mire Court, every night I walk home, I never take the omnibus. I never take a cab. Walking is good for the constitution and the bank balance. I live in a modest set of room who's great merit is their low rent. Some folk might call them damp, dark and cold but I call them cheap! A most wonderful adjective. My partner, Marley, bequeathed them to me. It was one of his wiser investments. Where is the door, how dark it is! Huh! (The face of Marley appears in the door frame, a knocker in his teeth). Jacob Marley! What! (Then shakes head) Pooh, pooh! Its simply a door knocker, not a phantom of a man who was laid to rest seven years ago. A well deserved rest dear Marley has, after a successful, if cautious business career. Rest in peace Jacob Marley. Its only a door, my door. There is no such thing as a ghost. (Entering his house which is arranged around him). There is no ghost behind the door, no ghost behind the mirror, no ghost inside the clock, no ghost under the bed. No ghosts at all because there is no such thing as a

ghost. The dead are dead. The poor are poor and I am neither. What time is it, my watch has run down, at least the grandfather clock is reliable. Strange, it seems to be irregular? Impossible the time between a tick and tock is fixed. And the bell, the chimes seem to have bronchitis! (CLOCK SONG as the ghostly carolers appear).

Ding dong bell Dong
You Scrooge have not got long!
Bell dong ding dong ding
Time flies ding dong
Man dies ding dong
Sing song not long
Ding dong bell
Sounds your knell
Ding dong bell dong
You Scrooge have not got long
To heed this song
And mend your wrongs
Dong ding dong.

SCROOGE: I must have the clock seen to. Or perhaps I should sell it. I have my pocket watch, does a man need a clock and a watch? Marley's fault, I would never have bought a clock. Oh, I must be more tired than I thought. Sleep is cheap, in truth sleep saves money because a sleeping man is neither cold nor hungry. (He puts on a night shirt and stretches in front of the mirror, a double stretch as he does, then after comic business with the mirror - then suddenly Marley appears in the mirror - he is weighed down by a safe which is chained to him rather than long chains).

Voices: Ebenezer Scrooge!

Ghostly voices: Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE: A spirit or a shadow! Well, since you have barged in, what do you want of me?

Ghosts: Much.

SCROOGE: You won't get much from me.

You look familiar. Who are you?

Ghosts: Ask me who he was.

SCROOGE: Very well, who were you?

Ghosts: In life he was your partner-

MARLEY: Jacob Marley! (Safe door opens to reveal MARLEY's Head).

SCROOGE: Jacob! What are you playing

at, old partner. Don't you come bothering

me now. You are as dead as a doornail,

remember.

MARLEY: Don't you believe in me?

SCROOGE: I don't!

MARLEY: Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE: Because any little thing upsets

them. You might be a case of indigestion. A

tough bit of beef, a blob of hot mustard, a

crumb of greasy cheese, a tiny piece of

underdone potato? You're no more than a

stomach upset. Ghost, phoo! You are more

gravy than the grave! (MARLEY howls).

SCROOGE: Well, Mr Indigestion, what do

you say about that? I'll tell you what I say: humbug! Humbug! Humbug! (Marley howls, lightning, black out and when the lights come back on, Scrooge is on his bed under the weight of the massive safe).

MARLEY: Man of worldly mind, do you believe in me now?

SCROOGE: Yes, yes, I do. I must. But Jacob, why do spirits walk the earth and why do you come to me at this hour? It is almost midnight and I have been hard at work all day. Someone has to earn the money. It's years since you made me even a penny.

MARLEY: (Rattles chains to work himself up then launches into Scrooge).

Ebenezer Scrooge, I come to warn you! It is required of every man that his spirit should walk the earth and travel far and wide. If that spirit shows no generosity and kindness in life, it is condemned to wander through the world after death. And it is a fearful journey, Scrooge. Woe is me! For in death we see the pain, cruelty and poverty we have created in life. Learn from me.

SCROOGE: But Jacob, you were so good, (slight pause) so good at making money.

MARLEY: It is not enough to make money! I should have shared that wealth and turned it into happiness.

SCROOGE: Jacob, I see you have a safe on your head, is it a fashion amongst the dead?

Ghosts: Agh! A fashion!

MARLEY: Fool! I forged these chains from greed, feel them!. Is the pattern and weight strange to you. (Places part of the chain in Scrooge's hands, who trembles).

SCROOGE: It seems of great value, and...very heavy.

MARLEY: It has no value, save as a punishment and burden. Would that you knew the weight and length of the chain you will bear yourself. It was as heavy and long as this seven Christmas Eves ago. It grows longer from day to day. Oh, yours is a ponderous chain!

SCROOGE: Oh! (Looks behind him to see if he has any chains and is relieved)

MARLEY: Change, change before it's too late.

SCROOGE: I can't, I'm too old. What can I do, can these chains be sold or written off against tax?

MARLEY: Morality can not be purchased, nor accountancy save your soul.

Why did I walk through crowds of fellow beings with my eyes turned down and never raise them to that blessed star which took the Wise Men to a poor stable? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!

SCROOGE: Don't be so poetic, Jacob, please.

MARLEY: (Hurt) I am trying to warn you.

To tell you that you still have a chance and hope of escaping my fate.

SCROOGE: Thank you. What a good friend you are, let me shake your hand.

MARLEY: You can keep it. (Hand comes off in Scrooge's grasp).

SCROOGE: Thank you. Agh! I'll wake up soon and this will all be over!

MARLEY: Agh! (Grabs Scrooge by lapels) Tonight you will be haunted by three spirits.

SCROOGE: What! Is that the hope you spoke of?

MARLEY: It is!

SCROOGE: (Sarcastic) Thank you. I would rather not.

MARLEY: Expect the first tonight when the clock strikes one.

SCROOGE: Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over with?

MARLEY: Expect the second and third when the bell strikes again. Look to see me no more. And look that, for your own sake, you remember me.

(All ghosts echo) Remember me.

Remember me. Remember me.

GHOSTS SING:

Remember remember this night in December

To care and be tender

Or must you be told to love more than gold?

Or you'll burn in Hell's embers

And feel endless pain

Wrapped in the chain

Of personal gain

So you'd better remember

This warning we render

This night in December

Remember, remember or your soul we'll dismember!

And that is the end er (pause) v'our song!

(SCROOGE sleeps).

Carolers: (Sing)

Tick tock

Tick tock ticking

Clock stop hands sticking

Tick tock tic tac

See the hands turning back

Back from dinner to breakfast

Back to youth and long gone past

Hear the tick of the backward clock

Putting the past into the dock

Tock tick tock tick tock

Unlock the past open the gate

It was your choice it was not fate

Tick tock tick

Now the clock hands stick

Tock tick tock

One o'clock!

Dong!

SCROOGE: (Lighting candle) One

o'clock? Can it be possible? It was near two when I went to bed. Can I have slept for

twenty three hours! (The Ghost of Christmas Past emerges from behind a grave, she is dressed as a candle. She emits light from her hat, Scrooge holds his hands to his eyes then examines them in the light).

SCROOGE: I can see the bones beneath the skin! Put out that light!

GHOST OF CP: Would you so soon with worldly hands put out the light I give! For shame!

SCROOGE: Uh - o. Are you the visitor I was told to expect?

CHRISTMAS PAST: I am.

SCROOGE: Who are you then?

CHRISTMAS PAST: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE: Long past?

CHRISTMAS PAST: No. Your past.

SCROOGE: What business brings you here?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your welfare!

SCROOGE: Well, I suggest that my welfare is best served by returning to bed and sleeping for eight hours until I wake refreshed, ready to face a new day of work, business, money! (He blows out the candle on the Ghost and plunges room into darkness). Well, that's the end of that then. One ghost down only two to go. Good night.

CHRISTMAS PAST: (Revealed standing over Scrooge's bed when she snaps her fingers and light bathes the stage.) Good morning! Because I am concerned with your welfare, Scrooge, I am taking you on a journey. A voyage of discovery. (The Carolsingres burst onto the stage playing blind man's bluff. Someone catches Scrooge and blindfolds him). The poor Carolers who then form a line in front of him and present things for him to touch).

SCROOGE: Where are you doing?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Perhaps this will help.

SCROOGE: How will a silly game help me to see?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Oh this game is not about seeing it's about understanding.

SCROOGE: Where am I? Where am I going?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Into your past.

(SCROOGE feels and hears sounds and objects from his youth). Good heavens! I know this gate - Only one gate in the world makes that sound! And through the gate is a path that leads to a tree where I carved my initials as a boy, here it is: E.S. And on top on the tree is a bird's nest. The path leads away to the house where I was born! Why that is me crying! (A girl laughs) Why that's Fan, my sister Fan. Only she could laugh like that.

GIRL: Ebenezer!

CHRISTMAS PAST: And your sister had a

child did she not, Fred. Fred who you will not visit on Christmas Day, why shame on you. For Fan's sake.

SCROOGE: Poor Fan, she died so young.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your lip is trembling and what is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE: (Weeping but holding back the tears) Nothing, a pimple perhaps, or a drop of sweat.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Shh. It is a tear, Scrooge. This is a precious drop.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Now, feel, feel the ground. Do you know that way?

SCROOGE: Why, I raced along this road as boy, I could walk it blindfold!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Strange you have forgotten it all these years.

SCROOGE: Oh it's coming back, all the people, all the faces, why -

MAN: Happy Christmas Ebenezer!

SCROOGE: And a happy Christmas to all of you! Where are we going, fine lads?

MAN: Why to Mr Fezziwigs. Where else would we go on Christmas Eve! (Ghost sends him on a horse around stage - although the horse is only a sound).

SCROOGE: But that was years later! Does the road lead there?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Yes, Scrooge, the road of your life led there and leads ever on until the end. (Heavy emphasis on "the end").

SCROOGE: Where am I?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Feel, Scrooge, feel.

SCROOGE: Oh smoke, (coughs) and that smell, yuck the river Thames! It must be The City. London. (Fezziwigs enter - man and wife).

FEZZIWIG: Young Ebenezer, why it's good to see you here.

Mrs FEZ: I hope you can dance as hard as you work, young man.

SCROOGE: (Feeling Fezziwig's face).

Why Mr Fezziwig, and all alive too! Why that bump on your nose is still there and oh I do beg your pardon, Sir.

Mrs FEZZIWIG: Well Merry Christmas, Ebenezer. And you'll make it all the merrier for young Belle. She's all a blushing in the corner, as the boys tease her for being your Sweetheart!

ALL: Ebenezer is your darling!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Now you are blushing, old man.

SCROOGE: (Ashamed) I am.

CHRISTMAS PAST: It brings colour to your cheeks.

MRS F: Oh Mr Fezziwig give me a Christmas kiss and make me blush. (But Mrs F ducks and Fez ends up kissing Scrooge).

FEZZIWIG: Come, Scrooge lad, join the party!

SCROOGE: Why no one ever held a party

like old Fezziwig. (Struggling) It must have cost a great deal of money.

CHRISTMAS PAST: And was it money well spent?

SCROOGE: It gives me happy memories.

CHRISTMAS PAST: And how will the glad memory of things past be given a price?

FEZZIWIG: Now assembled merry mortals. It is Christmas and there is nothing more fitting than fiddling, dancing, laughing, and an eating of cold roast, hot fowl, buttered parsnips, mince pies, pudding, beer, brandy, beer, beer and beer again.

CAROLER: Three beers for the cheer!

FEZZIWIG: And that we may deserve our ravenous hunger and enormous thirst. Let us dance!

ALL: (Sing)

The boars head in hand bear I
Bedecked with bays and rosmary
And I pray you my masters be merry
Quot estis in convivio

Caput apri defero reddens laudens domino
x2

The boars head as I understand is the rarest dish in all this land

Which thus bedecked with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico

Chorus repeat and fast instrumental jig. All clap and dance which SCROOGE blunders blissfully through).

SCROOGE: My oh my! (Loving it).

BELLE: Three cheers for My Fezziwig, the emperor of the feast! (Exit dancers and singers).

CHRISTMAS PAST: (Creeping up to the still blindfolded SCROOGE.) A small matter to make these folks so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE: Small!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Why, is Fezziwig an emperor because he spends but three or four pounds on making apprentices and clerks drink cheap beer and dance like monkeys?

SCROOGE: (Heated) It isn't that. Dear Fezziwig has the power to make us happy and unhappy. His power lies in words and looks, some so small and slight that it is impossible to count them up. His smile is music. The happiness he gives is quite as much as if it cost a great fortune. What is it? Oh, Spirit. I...I...I would like to speak a word or two to my poor clerk, Bob Cratchit.

CHRISTMAS PAST: You must wait, Scrooge, for my time grows short.

SCROOGE: I feel older, heavier.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Is it your wallet, Scrooge?

SCROOGE: No, no my heart. On with the party, I'm fine, I'm in great spirits! (The

Blinds Man Buff game starts again. This time Scrooge joins in and catches a young woman- Belle who takes off his blindfold).

SCROOGE: Belle. (Shocked and moved). Oh, oh. Belle. The Belle of the ball! - I touched you. Excuse me.

BELLE: If we were married you could hold me forever.

SCROOGE: (TO GHOST) Oh cruel, do I have another chance?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Did you love her very much?

SCROOGE: I had forgotten how much. Do I have another chance? (Ghost nods) Oh joy! (Turns to Belle). Oh that's lavender I smell, and roses, you have washed your hair in petals. I have smelt nothing but books and drains for years. (To Belle) Oh Belle, how can I keep these feelings safe, bank them...I...er...(bashful) ..this marriage you talk of...?

BELLE: I want to discuss that, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE: Oh Ebenezer, you make my name sound almost pleasing!

BELLE: I want it to be known as a good name, a well loved name. That is why I must talk to you about your business.

SCROOGE: Don't you worry your head about that.

BELLE: It is my heart that is worried, weighed down with care.

SCROOGE: What is it my...love. (Gulps).

BELLE: Your tenants. (Poor Carollers make pathetic tableau of starvation).

SCROOGE: What of them? (Snappy).

BELLE: The rents are so high, their wage so low. Could you not lower their rent?

SCROOGE: I fear you do not understand the principles of property and finance, dear Belle. Leave these matters to me and we will prosper.

BELLE: I must beg you, Ebenezer, to show mercy to your tenants. They are poor, it is no sin. It is Christmas Eve, you cannot cast them out into the cold!

SCROOGE: Tenants who fail to pay their rent must be evicted. I did not make the Law.

BELLE: But you administer it, and without mercy.

SCROOGE: How will I make a business out of mercy! (Belle gives a cry, SCROOGE turns to the Ghost of Christmas past): Am I saying this?

CHRISTMAS PAST: You did say it.

SCROOGE: Can I change what I said? Can I go back and make that reply again? I was only being practical. You cannot run a successful business by giving your money away! Help me!

CHRISTMAS PAST: No, the past is always with us. Time moves forward. Time crushed your finer feelings and hardened your heart.

SCROOGE: Belle, Belle. I strive only that we should be comfortable and prosperous. How else are we to marry, unless on my capital?

BELLE: Ebenezer, a man should marry only who he values most in all the world, is that not so?

SCROOGE: I value you above everything!

BELLE: Nonsense, there is another!

SCROOGE: Belle, no other woman has -

BELLE: Enough! I speak of no woman. A golden idol has displaced me. If it can cheer or comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, well then you are a fortunate man. Go to your money.

SCROOGE: Please, Belle, think again. (To Ghost) I'm losing her. Surely there's an excuse. (TO Belle as she leaves). Security, security, how can we live without security?

BELLE: You fear the world too much. Good bye Ebenezer. I hope you are safe in your golden castle. Maybe you will be faithful to the cold mistress who lies within. Go!

SCROOGE: No, no! I feel true to you again, I can love again! It was hidden inside all these years. Belle, come back, give me another chance! (He grabs for her but the poor tenants seize her and she climbs on their shoulders and looks down on SCROOGE from an unattainable height).

BELLE: Our engagement is an old one. This small ring you gave to me when we were both poor and content. (Takes off the ring and holds it high above Scrooge's reach). You are changed. I vowed to marry another man.

SCROOGE: (Impatient) I was a boy.

CHRISTMAS PAST: The young are not always foolish.

TENANTS: Nor the old wise.

BELLE: I release you from your promise. Take this ring. (Drops it to him). It is small gold enough.

SCROOGE: I know what she says: Be happy.

BELLE: Be happy.

SCROOGE: Aaah!

BELLE: May you be happy in the life you have chosen. (Every one is crying except the Ghost Of Christmas Past).

ALL: (Repeat as if in prayer) May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

SCROOGE: I am not happy. (Weeps).

CHRISTMAS PAST: Now you weep, Ebenezer, for what could have been.

Scrooge: 0, Belle! 0, Belle! (Belle vanishes off into the shadows.)

CHRISTMAS PAST: When the clock wound forward you forgot your love.

Scrooge: (Howls.) No!!

CHRISTMAS PAST: She is gone for good.

SCROOGE: No!!!! (He tries to stand, but

the engagement ring, weighs him down.) I can't lift.. .I can't lift...the gold..it weighs me down..this tiny thing! ...it weighs me down ..come back! Come back! (He sinks to the ground).. release me from this marriage to gold, release me from this ticking time.. .I want another clock! I want another chance! My heart is feeling again. Stop these memories haunting me!

ALL SING:

Silent night holy night
All is calm all is bright
Round yon Virgin mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
INTERVAL.

ACT TWO

Scrooge Sees The World (Curtain opens to reveal Carol singers over sleeping Scrooge. They sing – he wakes briefly to join in then returns to sleep).

Humbug Humbug leer and sneer
Leer and sneer leer and sneer
All on the happiest day of the year
Humbug x3
Humbug to all that's fantastic
Smother it all and be sarcastic
Never miss the chance to curse
Humbug x3
Close your mind snap shut the purse
Greet every baby with a curse
SCROOGE: Humbug you are all insane playing in a children's game
At your age do you have no shame?
Humbug x3
Humbug humbug leer and sneer all on the happiest day of the year
Your misery we will defeat and turn your humbug into something sweet!
Humbug leer and sneer all on the happiest day of the year
Your misery we will defeat humbug x9.
(Sing as chimes) Tick tock one o'clock.
DONG! (Scrooge sits up in bed.)
SCROOGE: One O'clock again! Will this night never end! (Sees Ghost) Who - are - you?
GHOST C PRESENT: Goodness. Happiness. Generosity. All things that life gives and give life. Carrots! Brussel Sprouts! Potatoes! Peas! (Vegetables juggles behind).
SCROOGE: Who are you?
GHOST C PRESENT: I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Don't you recognise me?
SCROOGE: (Sadly:) No. I have not looked at the world for so long. I hardly know anyone. I can recognise a mistake in a list of figures. But... nothing else!
GHOST C PRESENT: But surely you must know my older brothers? There are more than 1800 of them, one born every year. And each one a model for mankind. So,

Scrooge, shall we go?
 SCROOGE: Conduct me where you will.
 How do we travel?
 GHOST C PRESENT: As Father Christmas always travels! By air!
 SCROOGE: But I'm mortal? I'll fall!
 (Ghost gets in a large sack and offers another to Scrooge).
 GHOST C PRESENT: Bah humbug.
 Ready, get in! (They bounce around stage in sacks). Over St Pauls cathedral, under Tower Bridge, look Buckingham Palace - oh she's at home. (Salute). Ducks! (Noise)
 Look out! (Big weird noise).
 SCROOGE: What was that?
 GHOST OF C P: I have no idea. Ah the East End of London. (Couch) Look Bob Cratchit, your poor clerk who you bully so and Tiny Tim! (On to the stage race Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim. They race around, TINY TIM limping, as if on a sledge).
 GHOST C PRESENT: They are having the time of their lives, look at them Scrooge this is what Christmas is all about!
 SCROOGE: Yuck! Don't put your fingers in the snow its cold and wet.
 GHOST PRES: Its snow of course its cold and wet, they're having fun Ebenezer, its a thrill! (Snowball fight) Help! Avalanche! Call the St Bernard. Drink the brandy! Woof woof! This is what Christmas is all about having fun!
 (BOB and TIM join in the snowballfight but cannot see the Ghost or Scrooge. The GHOST C PRESENT takes glitter from sack and sprinkles it over Bob Cratchit, and TINY TIM.)
 SCROOGE: What's that for? They don't deserve your blessings! He's got the boy all cold and breathless!
 GHOST C PRESENT: It's Christmas. Even the poorest, sickest child has a right to enjoy themselves for a day!
 SCROOGE: Baaah
 GHOST C PRESENT: Yes?
 SCROOGE: Well! They act as though they were better off than me!
 GHOST C P: You are beginning to understand...perhaps it runs in the family. After all your nephew understands how to enjoy life and his happiness gives warmth on the coldest day.
 SCROOGE: All my useless nephew understands is how to waste money and time.
 GHOST C PRESENT: Oh...humbug. But why take my word for it, let's drop in! (The Fred's plus a GRANDAD are playing Blind man's buff and having a wonderful time. Fred catches Mrs Fred and he kisses passionately).
 Mrs F: Oh Fred, you shouldn't kiss a married woman so!
 GRANDAD: (Repressing laughter) It's

shocking.
 FRED: Oh dear I thought you were the beautiful young woman that lives upstairs!
 Mrs F: Oh I'm blushing like a bride!
 Fred: My bride you are! And I'll always be a newly wed till the day I die!
 GRANDAD: I think I'm going to cry.
 All Fred family: With happiness! (All kiss each other).
 SCROOGE: Yuck, its disgusting all that saliva!
 FRED: Humbug!
 GRANDAD and Mrs F: Humbug?
 FRED: He did he said Christmas was humbug!
 Mrs F: I don't believe it!
 FRED: I feel sorry for the Uncle Ebenezer. I asked him to join us for Christmas dinner but he would rather stay at home and count his money.
 Mrs F: You are right, my love, we should be sorry for him.
 GRANDAD: Miserable old miser! (All laugh).
 FRED Let's play a game.
 MRS F: No more kissing..or maybe just a little. (All kiss – all sigh with delight).
 GRANDAD: Lets play a guessing game.
 ALL: Animal or vegetable or mineral.
 CHRISTMAS PRESENT: (Helping Scrooge up). Come we must leave them.
 SCROOGE: But they are happy again. I need them, they warm me. See, they are playing a game. It is years since I played a game!
 FRED: So my thing is an...animal.
 Mrs : Does it live in a zoo?
 FRED: No.
 GRANDAD: Can you eat it!
 FRED: (Howls with laughter) Never!
 MRS: Does it have four legs?
 FRED: No.
 GRANDAD: Two legs?
 FRED: Yes.
 SCROOGE: Does it fly?
 CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Hush!
 MRS: Is it to be found in London?
 FRED: Yes.
 GRANDAD: So it lives in the city. Is it dangerous.
 FRED: Very. A beast.
 MRS: Does it growl and roar?
 FRED: Oh yes, often.
 MRS: When you see it in London is it led about the streets.
 SCROOGE: It's a bear, it's a bear! I win!
 FRED: It's not a bear.
 SCROOGE: It sounds like a bear, nothing else is that savage in London.
 MRS: Has it claws?
 FRED: No but it has tight fists!
 GRANDAD: Does it roar like this: "Humbug!"
 FRED: (Choking with mirth) Yes!

SCROOGE: (Pleasantly surprised) Is it me?
 ALL: SCROOGE! (Even Scrooge joins in).
 SCROOGE: Yes it is me!
 GCP: (Kissing SCROOGE on cheek which he enjoys) Well done. Sorry about the saliva.
 SCROOGE: Oh please, it was rather... agreeable. It's my turn now can I play?
 GCP: No Scrooge, we must visit the surplus population of the poor. See how they smile on Christmas day, the wretched laugh, the beggars smile and even the lowest walk on high. I add zest to their feet so their walk becomes a dance, I sprinkle savour in their nostrils! I turns every sigh into a melody, and every tear into tears of joy! Oh you Sir, you look poor, have a tangerine. What's your name? Are you very poor. (Improvisation with audience follows). Oh Happy Christmas Everyone! Look, look there are the poor Cratchits. Minnows, nay sardines in life's great ocean having a whale of a time!
 (CRATCHIT family enter – Bob, Mrs C. and puppet Tiny Tim).
 SCROOGE: Look, they're squeezing him too tight. (Scrooge is in a stew.) You wouldn't have caught my mother and father damaging me like that! I was never hugged or kissed! I was brought up decently.
 GHOST C PRESENT: What a shame! Yo ho ho! (Tickles Scrooge). (Cratchit races around stage with Tiny Tim puppet on shoulder as Mrs C throws snowballs. They collapse exhausted – they then hig the child).
 SCROOGE: Spirit they are squeezing him again! Can't they see that the child is crippled and delicate? And that Cratchit looks exhausted, the child may be small be he's not that light! My clerk will have no energy left for work tomorrow!
 BOB CRATCHIT: What a fortune we have here!
 MRS CRATCHIT: Indeed Bob, (kisses him) We are rich.
 SCROOGE: On fifteen shillings a week! How can he be rich?
 MRS C: Your smile is worth a fortune. And yours little Tim, its gold itself.
 BOB: Oh Tim was an angel today, wreathed in gold, Coming home from Church he told me that he loves to ride my shoulder because he's a little nearer to heaven.
 MRS C: Oh bless him.
 SCROOGE: Yes..bless him.
 BOB: He is growing stronger every day..
 MRS C: I would love to believe that Bob, so I shall. (Kisses Tim).
 BOB & MRS C: Tiny Tim grows stronger and healthier everyday.
 MRS C: But I wish I could feed him more.

To make him stronger. The dinner is almost ready. I've a chestnut for starters.

SCROOGE: That dinner its so small.

GCP: They are lucky to have anything at all on the little you pay.

SCROOGE: I'll give them more I want to give them more. Bob!

GCP: They cannot see you Scrooge.

BOB: God bless Mr Scrooge, the founder of the feast!

MRS C: Founder of the feast indeed. If he came in here I would give him some hard words to feast on! I'd, I'd' I'd whack on the head with my rolling pin, I'd take my ladle and kneecap him! I'd take Tiny Tim's little scarf and wrap it around his neck until..I'd.. (Bob kisses her and she melts – meanwhile all these threats actually happen to Scrooge).

BOB: Kiss him as its Christmas and you could warm an old man's heart.

MRS: I suppose you're right. God bless Mr Scrooge, and may he have the Christmas he deserves.

BOB: Poor man. (Coughing sound) Oh Tim, what is it?

Mrs C: Tim, Tim, no....oh he's cold Bob, the child's so cold.

SCROOGE: Oh, he's sick! Will he..will he..live?

GCP: Perhaps you can answer that? (BOB sings IN THE DEEP MID WINTER).

In the bleak midwinter
rosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron
Water like a stone

Snow had fallen snow on snow
Snow on snow

In the bleak mid winter long ago

SCROOGE: Tell me spirit, will the child live?

GCP: I see an empty chair, a crutch without an owner. If these shadows remain unchanged the child will die. And if Tim be like to die he had better do it quicker and decrease the surplus population. Man, if man you be at heart, forbear your wickedness. You would say what man shall live and what man shall die. Maybe in the eyes of heaven YOU are more worthless that that poor man's crippled child.

SCROOGE: Spare me!

GHOST C PRESENT: Your words come back to haunt you, Mister Scrooge' How dare you decide that some shall live and some shall die!

SCROOGE: Spare me! Spare the child and me! (Crying.)

GHOST C PRESENT: Why? What good do you do?

SCROOGE: I have never done any good.

GHOST C PRESENT: Time to go, Mister Scrooge! You have seen enough. (The

GHOST C PRESENT staggers towards

Scrooge. He has left his sack.)

SCROOGE: What's the matter? You're so weak!

GHOST C PRESENT: Christmas Day is coming to its end and so do I. Life is short. There are but fifteen minutes left to us.

SCROOGE: Us!

GHOST PRESENT: I to live you to learn. (The GHOST C PRESENT staggers upstage).

SCROOGE: Come back! (Then a disembodied voice is heard calling. This is accompanied with movement in the GHOST C PRESENT's sack that he has left behind.)

Voice: (Probably thrown by SCROOGE.)

Let me out! Let me out!

SCROOGE: Who is that? Father Christmas! There's something alive in your sack!

GHOST C PRESENT: Leave it alone! I have to go! I'm too old!

Voice: Let me out! Let me out!

SCROOGE: No! Come back! What is it? (Approaches the sack.)

GHOST C PRESENT: (Exiting;) Don't touch it! I can't help you now! I'm fading! Don't touch the sack!

SCROOGE: It's my Christmas Present!

Offstage cries: No! No! Don't touch the sack! Don't touch the sack!

Voice in sack: Open me! Open me!

SCROOGE: It is my Christmas present! For me! Or for everyone! I won't be greedy! I'll share it with everyone! I'll play with it! And everyone else can have a go! A present for everyone!

Offstage: No! No!

SCROOGE: I wonder what it could be! Christmas! It's exciting!

Voice: Open me! Open me!

Offstage: Don't open it! Don't open it!

SCROOGE: O happy Christmas everyone! Here's our present! (He opens the sack.) O my goodness. (Inside is a doll played by an actor - a wolfish, evil-looking child). Who are you?

CHILD: Gor blimey, you're bleedin' thick, ain't you! You're my Dad! My old Man! The block I'm a chip off!

SCROOGE: I haven't got any children. I never...you know..

CHILD: O, I ain't an ordinary sort of kid, Dad! I'm special! I'm the bleedin' future, ain't I? Eh? Ain't kids the future?

SCROOGE: What sort of future are you?

DUMMY: O, cut the posh talk! Let's go out on the town and have a gin or two. Or twelve! Hahahaha! Yo ho ho!

SCROOGE: O my goodness! I think you'd just as likely drink my blood!

CHILD: Me? Drink the blood of me dear old Dadda? I'll do that tomorrow! Hahaha! Tonight, it's you and me, Dad - out on the

town! I could eat a horse! Let's invite ourselves to dinner with all your tenants!

SCROOGE: I don't know.

CHILD: We'll eat all we want of their dinner and throw the rest in the street! With the tenants! Hahahaha! Yo ho ho!

SCROOGE: But, young man...

CHILD: Don't interrupt me, Dad. I'm hungry. For trouble. I don't like tenants, Dad. I don't like people who are different from me. Know what I mean? Irish! Gypsies! Tinkers! Beggars? Smelly stinking poor!

SCROOGE: Well, they are a bit....one feels uncomfortable.

CHILD/DOLL: You took the words right out of my mouth, Dad! Why should you have to feel uncomfortable, Dad? Let's get rid of them! Put them out on the streets! They're surplus, ain't they? Let them die, Dad, let them die..

SCROOGE: No! No! Get away! get away! I never meant that! (Scrooge throws the dummy into the sack.)

CHILD: (Exits howling is sack) Let them die! Let them die!

SCROOGE: Please, take it back! I don't want this present!

GHOST C PRESENT: This isn't your present, but it may be your future.

SCROOGE: What is it?

GHOST C PRESENT: His name is Ignorance. He is the child of mankind. Written on his brow is doom and destruction. Unless that writing is wiped away, all will be flames, all. O city of London, this is your child. You have made him in your workhouses and refined him in your prisons. Unless you change he will come of age! Then you will not control him, he will control you and the city will sink in flames. (Exits).

SCROOGE: What will become of us?

Sung notes: Dong! Dong! Dong!
(Scrooge is trapped in a shaft of blue light. He looks up and "sees" the Ghost of Christmas Future, who will lead him about the stage using shafts of vertical blue light, exposing scenes in white light that suddenly replace the blue - all these lights have hard edges and defined beams).

SCROOGE: Aah! I know who you are without looking. You're the spirit of Christmas Yet To Come? Yes. You're going to show me what hasn't happened but will happen? I know you mean to do me good? Yes? Please, I do mean to be a different man! Speak! In the name of goodness! (The blue beam gives way to white and reveals the businessmen, Scrooge looks on still "trapped in his own shaft of light. The businessmen drop money into a cash box as they speak, isolated in their white circle of light).

FIRST BUSINESSMAN: Busy day, Mr Potts.
 SECOND BUSINESSMAN: Busy day, Mr Dealer.
 POTTS: Time to take stock!
 DEALER: And share with no one.
 POTTS: What's the news Mr Dealer?
 DEALER: No news is good news, Mr Potts.
 POTTS: D'you have any insider information?
 DEALER: But there has been a death.
 POTTS: Oh, will there be an inheritance?
 DEALER: I doubt it. It's the old skinflint who's dead.
 POTTS: Oh, him, dead at last. I thought he'd never die! (They laugh x2).
 SCROOGE: Oh, I say, these two are hard as nails. I won't be like them, oh no, not any more!
 POTTS: But Mr Dealer, what has he done with all his money?
 DEALER: Left it to his business.
 POTTS: He had no one close you know.
 DEALER: It's likely to be a very cheap funeral. I don't know who would go to it.
 POTTS: I don't mind going if lunch is provided. I must be fed or I will look miserable,
 DEALER: Then people will think that I was a friend of that old miser!
 POTTS: What a thought, Mr Thin. (Both laugh x3).
 DEALER: Come to think of it, I was his best friend.
 POTTS: Really, Mr Thin?
 DEALER: Yes, I used to say "Good Morning" to him every Wednesday! (Both laugh x5).
 POTTS: Well, time for a gin and tonic!
 Mr DEALER Sorry can't join you, Christmas eve and rents must be collected. (The light snaps out and they vanish).
 SCROOGE: Ghost how callous and insensitive they are! Is that your lesson. Who do they talk of, a businessman? Jacob Marley perhaps? But Marley died seven years ago, you are the Future spirit. Unfold your purpose here! What's that awful woman doing? (The Ghost gestures to the grave robber).
 ROBBER WOMAN: Through foul and narrow ways I slink, past wretched houses, alleys and archways, like too many cess pools, disgorging their offences of smell, dirt and broken life upon the straggling streets. Ah, here's the door. No use knocking, no one to left alive inside. (Thieves man handle a corpse beneath a sheet, they dive under the sheet and strip off clothes and a ring which they pass to the woman to sell to the audience
 ROBBER WOMAN: (Sings)
 Who will buy these fine old things

Clothes and boots and golden rings?
 Who will buy these fine old things
 Boots and belts and good stockings
 For they'll look far finer on your finger or your back
 Than left to rot in a grave or a sack
 Did you hear what I said?
 What use have the dead for more than a shroud
 When they sit on a cloud and look down on poor you
 Who could really do with a cheap thing or two
 So don't be ashamed, you heard what I said
 All of our lives hang by a thread
 (Speaks) Rags, old clothes for sale! (Exits through audience).
 SCROOGE: Spirit, I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. I too may be robbed as I lie dead unless I mend my ways, any selfish man may suffer that poor fellow's fate. (The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE points to the corpse). Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful death, what terrors you have at your command. Who is this poor man Oh why is the corpse so alone, Spirit? How dark and empty the house, with not a man, woman or child by the deathbed to say a kind word for the dead man!
 GHOSTS/BED: Miser! Skinflint! Misery-guts! Mee-ow!
 SCROOGE: Woah! A cat why, should the cat claw so at the door?
 GHOSTS/BED: To feed on the rats that would feed on the corpse!
 SCROOGE: Spirit, this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go! (Still the bluelight reveals the corpse). I cannot draw back the sheet to see who lies here. Oh sad dead soul, to be comfortless and lie here. If there is any person in great London, who feels emotion caused by this man's death, show that person to me, Spirit, I beg you! There must be some human touched by grief for this soul!
 (Man enters in a ragged overcoat, he talks to an equally poor woman). He is one of Scrooge's tenants - Mister O'Flynn).
 O'FLYNN: Mornin' Mrs Isaacs.
 Mrs Isaacs: Good morning Mr O'Flynn.
 O'FLYNN: Is this the queue?
 MRS I: It is.
 SCROOGE: Why, those are two of my tenants? Lazy, workshy those two! They never pay on time!
 O'F: I can't pay, not the rent. Its rent or food. I have not had a day's pay for two weeks.
 Mrs Isaac: My husband's sick. I have a shilling for the Landlord and pray to the Good Lord he does not throw us on the street.

O'F: Have you rung the bell?
 Mrs I: Oh aye, but I suppose he likes to keep us waiting in the cold.
 O'F: I'll ring again. (Does so) I say, Sir, are you at home? Oh the door's open! Come on in.
 Mrs I: Sir, Sir, I've only a shillin' rent this week, please..are you there?
 O'F: On the floor look. Asleep after a hearty dinner I betyya. Sir- Oh Lord! (he touches the shoulder of the man who is sitting hidden by the back of the chair and a corpse tips to the floor.)
 Mrs: Oh! (Screams). He's dead.
 O'F: (Checks) Hooray! Her's dead! The Landlords dead!
 Mrs I: (delighted) Oh dead, dead as a doornail! Dead!
 Both: And I owed him so much money!
 Both: Hallelujah. (They jig off).
 O'F: The landlord's dead!
 SCROOGE: You silly fools! I'm your landlord! (Lights change again, Scrooge trapped in centre stage blue light shaft, he grabs a sheet and wraps himself in it). No more, no more! I don't want to see into the future! I don't want to know what happens next. Leave me alone, leave me in my bed! (He dives down beneath the sheet, little realising that he is lying on a grave plot. The Cratchits enter and mourn).
 MOTHER CRATCHIT: Poor poor Tim. (Placing Tim's crutch on the grave).
 SCROOGE: Tim! 0 no! No – can this be true?
 BOB CRATCHIT: Strange that Tiny Tim and HIM will lie in the same ground.
 SCROOGE: Who?
 MRS CRATCHIT: Mighty strange. How divided we are in life, but all equal in death.
 BOB: Tiny Tim always brought a ray of sunshine into our lives - even when he cast a shadow.
 MOTHER CRATCHIT: No more games in the snow, no more sled rides for Tim.
 BOB CRATCHIT: Oh his laugh was as strong as his heart was weak, oh Tim, my poor, poor child.
 SCROOGE: Oh Tiny Tim! I will not let this happen!
 MOTHER CRATCHIT: Then let's be happy, let's think of others less fortunate than ourselves! As Tiny Tim would have us do! And, maybe even spare a thought for the man that lies alongside our little son! I've said enough against him now.
 SCROOGE: Say the name! Say the name!
 BOB: God bless him!
 SCROOGE: Let me see! Let me see the name on the other grave!
 MOTHER CRATCHIT: God bless them both.
 CRATCHITS: God bless them both...

SCROOGE: Let me feel the carving in the stone! (Rises from his bed/grave). No, no. It is. It is. (Scrooge reads the name on the stone.) Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE: I was the man in whose death the poor rejoiced. I was the man stripped and robbed . I was the corpse that no one mourned. I, Ebenezer Scrooge, am the soul who died on Christmas Day. (He collapses and is taken back to bed – lights change – sung bells suggesting DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH – Scrooge stretches, wakes, and pulls on his trousers – before going to the ‘window’).

SCROOGE: What a strange dream..or.. Oh I need some fresh air. (Goes to window and raises it).

O’FLYNN: (Enters) Merry Christmas, Mister Scrooge!

SCROOGE: I beg your pardon?

O’FLYNN: I didn't mean to offend, sir.

SCROOGE: Oh, you didn't. Did you say 'Merry Christmas'?

O’FLYNN: Sorry, Sir. My mistake. I was just being friendly.

SCROOGE: And it is so good of you!

O’FLYNN: Jesus! Really?

SCROOGE: And is this Christmas morning?

O’FLYNN: Why, yes, sir!

SCROOGE: Oh how marvellous! How absolutely marvellous! Hahahaha! How - I don't know what to say! Yes, I do! Mister O'Flynn, Merry Christmas!

O’FLYNN: Have I been drinkin’? (smells own breath) Not yet. Merry Christmas, Mister Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Happy Christmas and....you can forget that rent you owe me! Hahahaha! Oh, I really enjoyed saying that!

O’FLYNN: Not half as much as I enjoyed hearing it, sir!

SCROOGE: Haha!

O’FLYNN: Why, Mister Scrooge, I think you are a much improved man!

SCROOGE: Now, do me a favour if you will. I want you to go to the poulterers. (Reaches into his jacket takes out a big wad of notes). Now go to the poulterers and buy the prize Turkey.

FLYNN: What the one half as big as me?

SCROOGE: That's the one. I want it to give it away!

O’FLYNN Are you nuts?

SCROOGE: No, but you can buy some of those too. And raisins, dates, tangerines, crackers, streamers, paper crowns and a Christmas tree. And order a second Turkey for yourself. And here's a tip. Off you go!

O’FLYNN: (Taking money): I'm off like a

shot! (Then call him back and increase tip twice).

SCROOGE: I...I feel so happy. Oh, who's this?

Enter :Charity collectors from first Act:

GENTLEWOMEN: Money for the poor -

GENTLEWOMEN: Money for the – Merry – Mr Marley/Scrooge – er Good bye!

SCROOGE: No, don't go, I'm so happy to bump into you again. I've been thinking, well re-thinking. Its the spirits you know, well the Christmas Spirit that has affected me so. I would like to make a modest contribution to the Charities you represent. Would this much be appropriate?

(Whispers in his ear).

GENTLEWOMEN: Did you call that a modest sum, why Mr Marley - Scrooge are you serious?

SCROOGE: Deadly serious - lively serious. Oh and do drop in for a drink and a game of skittles whenever you have the time.

G-WOMEN: Yes, Mr Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Ebenezer.

G-WOMEN: Ebenezer, what a lovely name! (Exit).

SCROOGE: A lovely name! Who - ho! Is that Fred. It is! What ho, nephew!

FRED: Uncle Scrooge! Merry – very good morning to you.

SCROOGE: Merry Christmas Fred!

FRD: Great heavens! Quick, quick over here Darling. My Uncle has wished me merry Christmas.

MRS F: Mr Scrooge, I am delighted to meet you at last!

SCROOGE: It it was my fault that we never met before– my what a beauty, may I...may I...lips on the cheek – sort of ..no saliva just a ... a (Turns to audience).

Mrs F; What does he mean...(Scrooge trying to shape lips into a kiss).

FRD: A..a Kiss?

MRS: Of course for Christmas (He kisses her on the cheek and then she throws him back and kisses him on the mouth – he is stunned and passes out).

FRED: Oh dear! Are you alright, Uncle?

SCROOGE: (Recovering) Alright! Am I alright.. I am over the moon! My I am happy! But you could make me so so so so much happier?

Fred and Mrs: How how how!

SCROOGE: By inviting me to your happy family Christmas dinner, where we can play blind man's buff, and animal –

FRED: Vegetable,

ALL: And mineral.

SCROOGE: Ah here's comes Mr Flynn! (To Frd actor) I said here comes Mr O'Flynn.

MRS FRD: Oh yes there he is, Mr O'Flynn. (The actor races offstage) And the Turkey!

MR O’FLYNN: I got it, I got it what a whopper! (Re-enters with vast turkey).

SCROOGE: And look here come the Cratchits!

Mr O FLYNN: Oh yes, Bob and his wife! (MRS F rushes off).

SCROOGE: Oh it's a miracle everyone gathered together. (Looking up) Its your work, isn't it Christmas Spirit!

BOB: (Enters) Hurry up, dear. (Sees Scrooge). Oh Mr Scrooge. Merry – a very good day to you.

SCROOGE: Merry Christmas to you, Bob, And especially Tiny Tim. This Turkey is for you and your family on this most special of days.

BOB: For us, Sir!

SCROOGE: Yes, and from now on I am doubling your wages

SCROOGE: Oh Happy Christmas! (Kisses Bob). May I? (To Mrs Cratchit)

Mrs Cratchit: Oh Mr Scrooge, you are a much improved man!

SCROOGE: Ebenezer, Ple-eeze call me Ebene-e-ezer!

ALL: Ebenezer!

SCROOGE: (Handing our streamers and crackers) Uncle?

ALL: Uncle Ebenezer.

CRATCHIT: Are you well, sir?

SCROOGE: I have not been well, Bob, but now I am mightily recovered. And as of tomorrow I shall endeavour to assist your struggling family become a second father to young Tiny Tim and be as good a friend as the whole world knows, and if folk laugh at me, let them! For I shall laugh with them, and I shall be a merry gentleman.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT :

(Enters with decorations): God rest you merry gentleman let nothing you dismay.

SCROOGE: And Tiny Tim, this present is for you. (Book as present as start).

BOB: (Opening book and reading last page).And it was always said of Scrooge that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the skill.

GHOST of Xmas: And Tiny Tim did NOT die.

SCROOGE: What's that, Tim? (Leaning over to Tim who whispers in his ear) God bless us. God bless us every one. (Humbug song reprise).

THE END

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