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## **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Adapted by Tom Smith

Based on the novella by Charles Dickens

Music by Roger Butterley

Lyrics by Tom Smith

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

SCROOGE

BOB CRATCHIT

FRED

COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1

COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2

CAROLLING BOY

PASSERSBY

GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

FAN

YOUNG EBENEZER

MR. FEZZIWIG

WILL DICKINS

EBENEZER

MRS. FEZZIWIG

BELLE

CLOVIA

SAPHRONELLA

PARTY GUESTS

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

MRS. CRATCHIT

PETER CRATCHIT

BELINDA CRATCHIT

MARTHA CRATCHIT

TINY TIM CRATCHIT

FRED'S WIFE

TOPPER

NEGLECT

WANT

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET-TO-COME

BUTCHER

FISHMONGER

CHARWOMAN

OLD JOE

LAUNDRESS

MALE BODY

BOY (OFFSTAGE VOICE)

#### NOTE ON MUSIC

The musical score will be provided to authorized producers as part of their performance license. A perusal version is also available. Please contact YouthPLAYS.

## ACT I

*(Sounds of BELLS and MUSIC. Lights up. Bustling city street packed with PEOPLE.)*

### **Christmas Day is Coming!**

**GROUP 1:** WELCOME ONE AND WELCOME ALL!  
WELCOME BIG AND WELCOME SMALL!  
TRIM THE TREE AND DECK THE HALL!  
CHRISTMAS DAY IS COMING!

**GROUP 2:** WELCOME EVERY LASS AND LAD!  
PLEASE ACCEPT OUR TIDINGS GLAD!  
ON THIS DAY WE GAILY ADD  
CHRISTMAS DAY IS COMING!

**ALL:** WELCOME ONE AND ALL  
TO CHRISTMAS!  
WELCOME ONE AND ALL  
WITH JOY!  
HEAR THE SPIRIT CALL  
ON CHRISTMAS,  
"BLESS US ONE AND BLESS US ALL"

**WOMEN:** ROAST THE GOOSE AND BAKE THE PIE!

**MEN:** HANG THE WREATHS AND GARLANDS HIGH!

**QUARTET:** SHARE YOUR SMILE WITH PASSERSBY!

**ALL:** CHRISTMAS DAY IS COMING!

**GROUP 1:** SOMETHING'S BUILDING IN THE AIR,

**GROUP 2:** SOMETHING THAT WE ALL CAN SHARE.

**GROUP 3:** BREATHE IT IN; WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

**ALL:** CHRISTMAS DAY IS COMING!  
WELCOME ONE AND ALL  
TO CHRISTMAS!  
WELCOME ONE AND ALL  
WITH JOY!  
HEAR THE SPIRIT CALL  
ON CHRISTMAS,  
"BLESS US ONE AND BLESS US ALL"

**SOLOISTS OR DUETS/TRIOS:** THINK OF FAMILY 'ROUND THE FIRE!  
THINK OF CANDLES ALL AGLOW!  
THINK OF CAROLS SUNG BY CHOIRS!  
THINK OF NOG AND MISTLETOE!  
THINK OF TURKEY SLOWLY ROASTING!  
THINK OF CANDY, THINK OF SNOW!  
THINK OF HELPING THOSE QUITE NEEDY,  
ALL GOD'S CREATURES HERE BELOW!

**ALL:** CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR!  
 GREET YOUR FELLOW MAN WITH CHEER!  
 LET HIM KNOW THE DAY IS NEAR!  
 CHRISTMAS DAY IS COMING!  
 AS WE WORK AND AS WE PLAY,  
 JUST ONE WISH WE JOINTLY PRAY:  
 KEEP A JOYFUL HEART AND SAY,  
 "HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS DAY!"  
 A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

*(Scrooge's office. SCROOGE is working in his ledger. BOB CRATCHIT is working at his desk, warming himself by the candle that provides him light and looking longingly at the coal box under Scrooge's desk. After a few moments, Cratchit crosses to the meager fire to try to warm himself. Scrooge glares, and Cratchit quickly returns to work. A moment later, FRED enters, full of holiday cheer.)*

**FRED:** Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you! Merry Christmas, Bob Cratchit!

**CRATCHIT:** Merry Christmas, Fred!

**SCROOGE:** Christmas? Bah. Humbug!

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

**SCROOGE:** I most certainly do. "Merry Christmas." What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

**FRED:** What right have you to be dismal? You're rich enough!

*(Cratchit laughs. Scrooge glares.)*

**SCROOGE:** What is Christmas but a time for spending money one doesn't have? For finding oneself a year older but not an hour richer? A time for balancing books, filled with deadbeats who'll beg and cry and whimper for more time to pay what they owe! Bah! Humbug!

**FRED:** There's no need to be cross, Uncle.

**SCROOGE:** What else can I be in a world full of fools? Humbug on Christmas, I say! If I had my way, every fool who mouthed a "Merry Christmas" should be boiled alive in eggnog and stabbed with a branch of holly through his heart.

**FRED:** Uncle Scrooge! What a horrible thing to say! Where's your Christmas spirit?

**SCROOGE:** Keep Christmas in your own way, Nephew, and let me keep it in mine!

**FRED:** But Christmas is a time of joy! It's the only time I know of when men and women open their shut-up hearts and think of the less fortunate as if they were their fellow man. And therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that Christmas has done me good, and I say God bless it!

*(Cratchit applauds. Scrooge glares at him.)*

**SCROOGE:** *(To Cratchit:)* Another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your employment! *(To Fred:)* A very compelling speech, Nephew. The room has warmed itself considerably from your excessive hot air.

**FRED:** Don't be angry, Uncle, especially when I've come with such a joyous invitation! Come, dine with me and my wife tomorrow! Let us enjoy a family feast for the holidays!

**SCROOGE:** I'd rather dine with the devil first.

**FRED:** Uncle Scrooge! How can you say such a thing?

**SCROOGE:** Apparently quite easily! I still don't know why you ever got married, Nephew.

**FRED:** Why? Because I fell in love!

**SCROOGE:** Love is nothing more than a convenient excuse that keeps one from productivity! A wife is a distraction to business matters. Always wanting your time, your attention. And what do you get in return?

**FRED:** A world of happiness I'm afraid you'll never understand, Uncle!

**SCROOGE:** ...Good afternoon, Nephew.

**FRED:** You never came to see me when I was a bachelor. Why use my marriage as an excuse now? Come, let us dine together on Christmas Day as a family should!

**SCROOGE:** I said, good afternoon!

**FRED:** I am sorry with all my heart to find you so resolute. But as resolute as you are against holiday cheer, I am equally resolute to keep it. So: a Merry Christmas, Uncle! And a Merry Christmas to you and yours, Bob Cratchit!

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Merry Christmas to you and yours, Fred!

*(Fred rushes over to the coal box under Scrooge's desk, and throws a new brick into the fire.)*

**FRED:** And a warm and happy New Year!

*(He exits. Scrooge quickly tries to grab the coal out of the fire. After much effort, he does so using Cratchit's scarf. He returns the scarf to Cratchit's neck.)*

**SCROOGE:** Stuff and nonsense!

*(They return to work. A moment later, COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1 and COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2 enter.)*

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** I notice above your door that this is the office of Scrooge and Marley. Do I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

**SCROOGE:** Marley is dead, to begin with. Dead as a doornail. He has been dead seven years this very night.

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** We have no doubt his generosity is well-represented by his surviving partner, sir!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** At this festive time of year, Mr. Scrooge, it is vitally important that we remember the poor and destitute, who suffer so greatly. Thousands in want of common necessities. Thousands neglected by life's common comforts.

**SCROOGE:** Oh, yes, I see, I see. What an economically tumultuous time we live in!

*(He gets out from behind his desk and begins pacing the room. They follow.)*

Tell me something: are there still prisons?

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** Too many, sir!

**SCROOGE:** Factories exploiting labor at all hours of the day and night?

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** I pray there were not, but yes.

**SCROOGE:** And the workhouses? Are they still in operation?

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** Unfortunately so, sir.

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** It is appalling!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** Quite dreadful, indeed!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** But a difference can be made!

*(He pulls out his accounting book.)*

Now, what shall we put you down for, Mr. Scrooge?

**SCROOGE:** Nothing.

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** Nothing?

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** Oh, I see! You wish to make your contribution anonymously!

**SCROOGE:** No, I wish to make no contribution at all! I work for my money and I find no need whatsoever to make easier the lives of the idle and lazy! My money supports the workhouses and prisons, and I would appreciate the vagrants to find their way there!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** Mr. Scrooge, surely you cannot mean that!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** Many would rather die!

**SCROOGE:** If they would rather die, then they should do it! It will only help control the surplus population!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** But, Mr. Scrooge—!

**SCROOGE:** Good afternoon, gentlemen!

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 1:** Won't you please reconsider?

*(Scrooge escorts them to the door.)*

**SCROOGE:** I said, "Good afternoon!"

*(They rush out. A second later, Collector for the Poor 2 pops his/her head back in.)*

**COLLECTOR FOR THE POOR 2:** I can only say, sir, that I hope you'll think better of the spirit of the day. Here's our card should you change your mind.

*(Scrooge grabs the card.)*

**SCROOGE:** Bah!

*(Collector for the Poor 2 scurries off. Scrooge throws the card into the fireplace.)*

Humbug!

*(A moment later, a small CAROLLING BOY crosses through the street, singing "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." His cap is off to collect money. PASSERSBY give him coins. He crosses to*

*the office door. Cratchit opens it and hands him a coin. Scrooge, in a rage, grabs a poker from the fireplace and approaches him. The Carolling Boy runs off, screaming in terror.)*

Beggars everywhere!

*(Scrooge returns to work. Cratchit looks anxiously at a clock outside. Scrooge clears his throat and Cratchit returns to work. A moment later a tower bell RINGS seven. Cratchit quickly finishes an entry, blows the ink dry in his ledger, puts the ledger and pen in his desk, puts on his hat and extinguishes his candle. He crosses to Scrooge and waits expectantly.)*

You'll be wanting the entire day off tomorrow, I suppose?

**BOB CRATCHIT:** If it's convenient, sir.

**SCROOGE:** Of course it's not convenient! Nor is it fair! If I was to withhold a day's salary from you, you'd be in an uproar, mewling like an orphaned kitten. Yet here I am: forced to pay you a full day's wages for no work at all?

**BOB CRATCHIT:** It's only once a year, Mr. Scrooge.

**SCROOGE:** A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every December twenty-fifth.

*(Carefully guarding his coin purse, he hands Cratchit his pay.)*

Be here all the earlier the next morning.

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. And a Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge.

*(He rushes off.)*

**SCROOGE:** Bah. Humbug!

*(He snuffs his candle, puts on his hat, and locks the door and leaves. Scrooge walks home. Passersby walk the streets, steering clear of Scrooge. Set changes to exterior door. Nine CHIMES of a bell. Scrooge reaches for his keys. The doorknocker suddenly takes on the appearance of JACOB MARLEY who calls out "Scrooooooge!")*

Jacob M-M-Marley!?!

*(Just as quickly, the doorknocker returns to normal.)*

Nonsense! That was nothing, nothing at all! Just some remains of an underwhelming supper from a rather greasy pub. A bit of undigested beef. A blot of mustard going rancid, or a crumb of moldy cheese. Jacob Marley! Whatever it was, there's more of gravy in it than of grave.

*(He crosses into his bedroom, puts his hat on a bed knob, and hangs up his coat and scarf.)*

It's so simple, is it not, to doubt one's senses when any little thing affects them? Why, I remember when I was but a lad there were countless times I saw a thing that wasn't there.

*(He removes his ascot, vest, pants and shoes, revealing a ratty nightshirt underneath.)*

Looking out my bedroom window at night, I remember seeing an angry giant that later turned out to be a tree and some foliage. Or walking down the stairs to the parlor I spied a ferocious grizzly bear that was, in reality, my mother's fur coat, slung over a chair. What I spied at my door tonight was nothing more than a shadow or a reflection from the moon. There's no more of Jacob Marley in my doorknocker than Father Christmas himself within my chimney! Humbug on loose imaginations and the bedlam they cause. Humbug, I say!

*(He puts on his nightcap and gets into bed. He notices a candle is still lit on his fireplace. He tries, unsuccessfully, to blow it. He scurries across the floor.)*

...cold, cold, cold...

*(He blows out the candle, and jumps back into bed, warming his feet. A brief moment of silence. WIND EFFECT: "Scrooooooge!" The sound of a cellar DOOR OPENING. CHAINS and FOOTSTEPS downstairs. CHAINS and FOOTSTEPS climbing steps. Scrooge rises, putting on his slippers. He looks around as the GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY enters bathed in eerie glowing light.)*

How now? What do you want with me?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** Much.

**SCROOGE:** Who...who are you?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** Better to ask who I was.

**SCROOGE:** Who were you?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley!

**SCROOGE:** Marley! But how can it be?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** You do not believe me?!?

**SCROOGE:** I do. I must. But why do you walk the earth, Spirit, and why do you come to me?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** It is required of every man that the spirit within him travels in life. If it does not, it must travel after death, doomed to wander the world, and witness what it cannot share but might have shared on earth.

**SCROOGE:** Why are you wrapped in fetters?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** In death, I wear the chain I forged in life. Link by link, chain by chain, it is the burden of a life lived, but not well-lived. I see your chain, Ebenezer, as heavy and as long as my own.

**SCROOGE:** No, it cannot be! Jacob Marley, speak comfort to me!

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** I have none to give! *(Crying out in pain:)* Ohhhhh!

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, what is it that causes you such pain?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** These shackles, Ebenezer. They tighten and choke me, reminding me always of the pain I caused others. Each link is a moment wasted. Each iron a man, woman or child I neglected.

**SCROOGE:** But how can such a chain be made, Jacob, when we have both been good men of business?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** Business!?! Mankind is our business. The common welfare of all is our business! Charity, mercy, and kindness are our business! Take heed, Ebenezer: my time is nearly gone, for I am doomed to wander the earth endlessly, never staying in one place but for a few moments. I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate!



**SCROOGE:** How? Tell me!

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** You shall be visited by three spirits.

**SCROOGE:** I think I'd rather not...

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** Without their visits, you cannot hope to avoid the path I tread. Look, Ebenezer!

*(He magically draws Scrooge to the window.)*

See the people in the street? They are like you. They go about their business, senses shut off, closing their eyes to the inhuman misery that surrounds them. Yet in the afterlife, these same people will see nothing but grief, pain, and suffering. They cannot know – they cannot possibly know – the eternal regret: the regret that comes from not using one's life to help others. *(He cries out in pain:)* Ohhhhh! *(To Scrooge:)* Expect the first spirit tonight, when the bell tolls one. The second will arrive at that same hour. The third when the last stroke of twelve ceases to vibrate.

**SCROOGE:** Couldn't I see them all at once and have it over with, Jacob?

**GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY:** I hope this will be our last meeting, Ebenezer. For your own sake, remember what has been said here tonight!

*(He disappears. Scrooge shakes off the moment.)*

**SCROOGE:** Bah...

*(A loud CRASHING sound, as the house shakes. Scrooge hops quickly into bed and pulls up the covers. He can only manage a whisper...)*

...humbug...

*(The tower bell STRIKES one.)*

One o'clock! But it was past two when I went to bed. An icicle must have gotten into the clock!

*(MUSIC. Enter the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST, who is an ethereal creature.)*

*(She is airy and wispy and emits a glow of light.)*

Are you the spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** I am.

**SCROOGE:** Who or what are you?

*(He rises, and puts on his robe.)*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** I am the Ghost of Christmas Past. Your past.

**SCROOGE:** What brings you here tonight?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Your welfare.

**SCROOGE:** I'm much obliged, but I can't help thinking that a good night's rest might be more to my welfare.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** It's time, Ebenezer. You must reclaim your past!

**SCROOGE:** But why? The past is dead; it's gone and buried. No good can come from reclaiming it.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** There is much you don't realize! Now, come with me!

*(She magically draws him to the window and extends her hand.)*

**SCROOGE:** We are two flights above the street! I am mortal, Spirit, and will likely fall!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Bear but a touch of my hand, and you shall be upheld in more than this.

*(She touches his heart. Lights fade. MUSIC. The bedroom drifts away. Lights up on a deserted alleyway.)*

**SCROOGE:** Good heavens! The alleyway down the block from where I lived as a boy! I'd almost forgotten!

*(Scrooge starts to break down a bit.)*

...I'd almost forgotten.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?

*(Scrooge wipes away a tear.)*

You recollect this place?

**SCROOGE:** I used to hide here when I was a lad. When my father's anger was...too much to bear.

*(Enter YOUNG EBENEZER with a black eye, eating a scrap of food. He is obviously living on the streets.)*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** It's late Christmas Eve. The streets are deserted. Only a solitary child out in the cold, hiding. There is no feast for him tonight: only a small bit of food he's stolen. He's been living on the streets for over a week: no shelter, no warmth, no love. Not a soul would offer him charity.

**SCROOGE:** Poor lad! And do you see his blackened eye? I feel for him.

*(FAN rushes in.)*

**FAN:** Ebenezer! Ebenezer!

*(Fan and Young Ebenezer freeze.)*

**SCROOGE:** Fan!?!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** *(Stopping him:)* These are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, I've just realized...the boy: it's me, is it not?

*(Ghost of Christmas Past nods. Fan and Young Ebenezer unfreeze.)*

**FAN:** Ebenezer, at last I have found you! I have come to take you home!

**YOUNG EBENEZER:** Home, Fan?

**FAN:** Yes, home for good and all! Father is much kinder now, and he misses you. He sent me in a coach to bring you home. A coach!

**YOUNG EBENEZER:** Are you sure it's all right, Fan? I mean...I merely asked Father for a few pence to buy some presents for Christmas, and he got so cross. I just wanted this to be a merry Christmas for you and Mother!

**FAN:** Father's better now, Ebenezer. He hasn't had a drop of drink since it happened. He promised he won't hurt you anymore, and I believe him. Now, come, let's go home!

**YOUNG EBENEZER:** Home: I cannot think of a finer gift! This is to be a merry Christmas after all!

**FAN:** We'll have the merriest time in the world! Oh, how I've missed you!

*(They hug and rush off as the lights fade.)*

**SCROOGE:** Fan? Come back! Don't leave me again! Just let me look at you...once more!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Your sister Fan was a delicate creature.

**SCROOGE:** With the largest heart in the world!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** She had a child...

**SCROOGE:** My nephew, Fred. After Fan died, he's the only...family...I still have.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** I see not all scars heal with time.

**SCROOGE:** He's a fine boy, Fred. I made certain he would never be without, never have to beg for food or money.

*(Guilt washes over him.)*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** What is the matter?

**SCROOGE:** There was a boy singing a carol at my door tonight. I should have liked to have given him something, is all.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Come. We've more to see...

*(Ghost of Christmas Past touches Scrooge and they travel.)*

*(Lights rise on Fezziwig's office.)*

Do you know this place?

**SCROOGE:** Know it? I apprenticed here!

*(FEZZIWIG enters. He is a large and hearty man, full of joy.)*

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Will! Come here, boys! Hilee-ho!

**SCROOGE:** Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart, it's Fezziwig, alive again!

*(Enter WILL DICKINS and EBENEZER, both about 21.)*

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Christmas Eve, Will! Christmas, Ebenezer! No more work tonight!

**EBENEZER:** Do you mean it, Mr. Fezziwig?

**WILL:** But it's only two o'clock!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Christmas comes but once a year, boys! Now, I've invited a few friends to join us in a celebration! Hosted, of course, by my lovely family! Quickly, let's set up the place before you can say "Jack Robinson!"

*(Will and Ebenezer rush off and bring on a table of lavish food. MR. FEZZIWIG looks down the hall for arriving guests.)*

**SCROOGE:** Will Dickens, to be sure! We were so close!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Hillee-ho! Hurry, boys, hurry! The guests are arriving.

*(Enter the PARTY GUESTS, each with a stein of ale, followed by MRS. FEZZIWIG, grand in her gown, and CLOVIA, SAPHRONELLA, and BELLE. The Guests applaud the entrances, and begin to mingle.)*

**CLOVIA:** Mother, may we really imbibe Father's Christmas ale this year? Just like grown-ups?

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Certainly you may, my dearest lamb-chop! But not too much and not too fast: you know you're prone to fits of gastric distress!

**SAPHRONELLA:** Please, Mother, won't you tell us what our Christmas surprise is to be? I'm practically bursting at the seams!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Your father will reveal all when the time is right! Now, mingle, girls, mingle! A mare never met her colt without prancing around the stable first with her tail held high!

*(The Girls mingle with the Guests.)*

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** A glass of spirits, my love?

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Thank you, my sweet.

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** You look divine, my pet! Like a Scottish wood nymph! One with whom I should like to frolic and play in the dewy dawn!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Mr. Fezziwig! Behave yourself! Or else...!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Or else, what, my deliciously devilish debutante?

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Or else I shall be forced to trap you with my feminine wiles, from which, I fear, you'll find no escape!

**BELLE:** *(Coming over, mortified at her parents' behavior.)* Mother! Father! I believe it's time for a toast!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Of course! Mrs. Fezziwig, the honor is, as always, yours!

### **A Toast to Christmas!**

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** RAISE A GLASS TO CHRISTMAS EVE,  
JOYOUS NIGHT BEFORE THE DAY.  
CELEBRATE WITH VIM AND VIGOR.  
CELEBRATE THE...  
FEZZI-WAY!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** LOVE AND LAUGHTER FILL YOUR HOUSEHOLD,

FAMILY, FRIENDS WE HOLD QUITE DEAR.  
TOAST THE DAY AND  
TOAST EACH OTHER.  
HAPPY, HEALTHY, HALE NEW YEAR!

**ALL:** TO CHRISTMAS!  
TO CHRISTMAS!  
WE'LL DRINK A TOAST TO CHRISTMAS!  
TO CHRISTMAS!  
TO CHRISTMAS  
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**WILL:** CHEER THE DAY AND CHEER THE SEASON!

**EBENEZER:** CHEER OUR HOSTS SO GOOD AND KIND!

**WILL AND EBENEZER:** CHEER WITH GLAD AND THANKFUL HEARTS!

**WILL:** CHEER AWAY TIL –

**EBENEZER:** – WE GO BLIND!

**ALL:** TO CHRISTMAS!  
TO CHRISTMAS!  
ANOTHER TOAST TO CHRISTMAS!  
TO CHRISTMAS!  
TO CHRISTMAS  
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**BELLE/CLOVIA/SAPHRONELLA:** HILLEE-HO WE CHEER YOUR KINDNESS.

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** I, THEIR FATHER, DO THE SAME.

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND BLESSINGS.

**BELLE/CLOVIA/SAPHRONELLA/MR. FEZZIWIG/MRS. FEZZIWIG:** WE'RE SO HAPPY  
THAT YOU CAME!

**FEZZIWIGS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**GUESTS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**FEZZIWIGS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**GUESTS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**FEZZIWIGS:** ANOTHER TOAST TO  
CHRISTMAS!

**GUESTS:** ANOTHER TOAST TO  
CHRISTMAS!

**FEZZIWIGS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**GUESTS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**FEZZIWIGS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**GUESTS:** TO CHRISTMAS!

**FEZZIWIGS:** AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**GUESTS:** AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**FEZZIWIGS:** AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**GUESTS:** AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**FEZZIWIGS:** AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**GUESTS:** AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**ALL:** AND A JOYOUS, VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*(The Party Guests CHEER and continue toasting each other.)*

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** *(Quieting the Crowd:)* My dears, it's Christmas Eve! A toast to that glorious occasion! May tomorrow, and the whole of the new year, find us merry, content, and filled with the goodwill of the season towards all our fellow man.

**PARTY GUESTS:** BRAVO! TO CHRISTMAS! HEAR, HEAR! ETC.

**WILL DICKINS:** To Mr. Fezziwig, and his lovely family! A cheer to good health and good fortune!

**EBENEZER:** A cheer to bringing family and friends together on this most special evening!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** And, if I may be so indulgent, a cheer to my three beautiful daughters and the gorgeous creature who conducted them into the world!

*(He and Mrs. Fezziwig rub noses.)*

**PARTY GUESTS:** To Fezziwig! Good fortune! Good health! etc.

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Strike up the music! A dance! A dance!

**SAPHRONELLA:** I need a partner!

**CLOVIA:** Me too! Me too!

*(The MUSIC strikes up.)*

**SAPHRONELLA:** You! Come here!

*(Everyone begins to dance. Belle and Ebenezer dance together. During the course of the dance, Scrooge dances with Belle, unseen and unnoticed by Belle or Ebenezer. For the first time, we see*

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*him experience joy. Suddenly, the Ghost of Christmas Past pulls him away. The dance ends, and the Guests start to mingle.)*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** It's all such a small matter, is it not, to make these silly folk so full of gratitude?

**SCROOGE:** Small?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** He has spent but perhaps a few pounds. Is that so much that he deserves such high praise?

**SCROOGE:** It isn't that at all, Spirit! We toasted not to the money he spent, but to the happiness he gave. His abundant cheer was as great as if it had cost a fortune! It was his holiday spirit we cherished!

*(He is suddenly quiet.)*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** What is it, Ebenezer?

**SCROOGE:** Nothing. I should just like to say a word or two to my nephew Fred just now, that's all.

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** My dears, the hour grows late. But, before we depart, Mrs. Fezziwig and I have a few small announcements to make.

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Mr. Fezziwig and I have labored these many years to raise daughters to be as kind and intelligent as they are beautiful. And so we have, with Clovia, Saphronella and young Belle.

*(APPLAUSE as the Girls step forward.)*

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** As you know, Clovia has a particular fondness for exotic cultures. Often she is found reading travelogues and dreaming of a life filled with exploration and wonder. Because of this, Mrs. Fezziwig and I are proud to present to her a gift that will make all her dreams become reality. Clovia, my eldest, we are sending you on a year-long trip to...

**MR. FEZZIWIG/MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Frozen Antarctica!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** You'll live off whale blubber, mush a team of dogs in the snow, and live in an igloo!

**CLOVIA:** Oh, Mother! Oh, Father! I don't know what to say! Oh! My! Good! Ness! Thank you!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** And for our second eldest, Saphronella, who is never second in our hearts: As many of you may attest, Saphronella is often found caring for our numerous hounds and horses. She is rarely seen without a cat or a bird perched somewhere on her shoulder. A kinder heart towards animals is rare to find. Dearest Saphronella, for your gift we are sending you on a year-long trip to...

**MR. FEZZIWIG/MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Darkest Africa!

**MRS. FEZZIWIG:** You shall study the lives of wild boars! You'll learn their hidden secrets for finding exotic truffles, and have the opportunity to love and protect the ugliest of God's creatures!

**SAPHRONELLA:** Oh, Mother! Father! It's a dream come true! Hurray for me!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** And last, but certainly not least, our youngest: Belle.

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, show me no more!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Now, on the dawn of her adulthood, Belle has surrendered to the wiles of one of you in this very room. One to whom I've furnished shelter, food, and a warm bed.

**WILL DICKINS:** And a sore back and aching eyes!

*(The Party Guests laugh.)*

**SCROOGE:** Please, Spirit, I beg of you!

**MR. FEZZIWIG:** Yes, I'll not deny he's the hardest working apprentice ever to balance a book or close an account. Come spring, our lovely Belle shall wed that most industrious of young men...

**MR. FEZZIWIG/MRS. FEZZIWIG:** Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge!

*(The Guests cheer and applaud. Clovia and Saphronella shriek and hug Belle. Mrs. Fezziwig, crying, pushes them aside and hugs Belle.)*

**WILL DICKINS:** A dance! A dance in honor of the betrothed!

*(MUSIC begins. Everyone begins to dance as Ebenezer and Belle sneak away. The dance starts to fade away.)*

**SCROOGE:** *(Scarcely able to speak:)* Spirit, take me home...

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** But there is more to see.

**SCROOGE:** I cannot bear more! Why can't we let the past remain dead and buried?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** The past never dies. Like a shadow, it follows you throughout your days. Come, Ebenezer, and observe.

*(They travel. Lights rise on a desk with Ebenezer working in a ledger.)*

A young man, hunched over a desk. He's the only one still working. Everyone else has left to celebrate the first day of spring.

*(Belle enters. She is upset. She and Ebenezer quarrel in silence.)*

His body already shows signs of age, yet he is only twenty-two. His fingers clutch his pen so tightly they're starting to gnarl. And you can see the faintest signs of a hunch forming in his back. *(Noticing the quarrel:)* They seem to be in the middle of an argument.

**SCROOGE:** No! I know what is to come and I cannot bear it! Please, Spirit, take me back!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Soon...

**BELLE:** It matters little to you, does it not, that the attentions you once placed on me you now place on your wealth?

**EBENEZER:** There is nothing so hard in life as poverty. I attend my money so acutely to spare you that!

**BELLE:** So you spare my affection instead? Is it really such an even trade for you? You've changed, Ebenezer Scrooge. Your dreams, your hopes, your aspirations have changed. Now only greed and financial gain engross you!



**EBENEZER:** I have changed, but not toward you, Belle. Never toward you!

**BELLE:** Ebenezer, our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so. When it was made, you were another man.

**EBENEZER:** I was but a foolish boy!

**BELLE:** A boy with a full heart and a passion for living: I would not call that foolish. And now...? (*Steeling her nerve:*) Ebenezer, if you were free today, would you still seek out a girl with so small a dowry? If we had never had our past, would you seek me out and try to win me now?

**EBENEZER:** You seem to think I would not.

**BELLE:** I would think otherwise if I could. (*Long beat:*) And your unwillingness to answer tells me what is in your heart.

*(She slowly takes off her engagement ring and presses it into Ebenezer's hand.)*

I release you. With a full heart for the love of the boy you once were: I release you. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

*(She rushes off. Ebenezer rises, but does not move.)*

**SCROOGE:** Go to her, you fool!

*(Ebenezer remains still.)*

Go or she'll never return! Go! Go!

*(Ebenezer starts to call out "Belle!" but stops at the "B" sound. He takes the ring, and places it in his desk.)*

**EBENEZER:** B—ah!

*(He goes back to his books. The lights fade.)*

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, show me no more! Why do you torture me so?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** (*Suddenly furious:*) I told you these were shadows of things that have been! That they are what they are, do not blame me!

**SCROOGE:** Leave! Take me back! Haunt me no longer!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** As you wish!

*(She violently waves her hand, and Scrooge is tossed about. His bedroom reappears as Ghost of Christmas Past and Ebenezer disappear.)*

**SCROOGE:** My own bedroom at my own house. Spirit?

*(He looks around.)*

Gone.

*(HE jumps into bed.)*

I mustn't think of that which was.

*(The BELL CHIMES one.)*

One o'clock...again?

*(Suddenly, Scrooge's fireplace blazes enormously. Holly, mistletoe, ivy and berries rise from the floor, covering the walls and reflecting light like tiny mirrors. In the midst of this comes the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. He is an enormous man, full of life.)*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** Ebenezer Scrooge! Come and know me better, man. I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Why do you look so frightened? You have never seen me before?

**SCROOGE:** Never. I...I do not celebrate the day.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** And I have never seen the like of you. I sense only the smallest spark of joy within your heart, a candle flame where there should be a raging fire!

*(He laughs as the fireplace roars again, scaring Scrooge.)*

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth tonight and learned a lesson. If you will teach me another, let me profit by it.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** Then we must away, for I live only this one night. Clutch my robe!

*(Scrooge grabs his sleeve. Magic lighting. The Ghost of Christmas Present laughs and laughs into the blackout.)*

*(End of Act I.)*

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**ACT II**

*(The Cratchits' house. Mrs. CRATCHIT is setting the table. BELINDA and PETER help. Christmas Present and Scrooge are outside, looking in.)*

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, where have you taken me?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** Not far. Yet far enough.

**SCROOGE:** It is the home of Bob Cratchit!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** It is.

**SCROOGE:** But why are we here, Spirit? What could I possibly learn from my clerk?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT:** Much. Observe!

*(He waves his hand and the lights come up full on the Cratchit home.)*

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Wherever is your father, Peter? And Belinda, where is your brother? And where is Martha as well?

**MARTHA:** *(Entering:)* Here I am, Mother!

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Bless you, dear, how late you are! They're keeping you longer and longer at the milliner's.

**MARTHA:** We had a tremendous amount of work to finish up.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** But toiling so late, on Christmas Eve? Well never mind, as long as you're here! Stand by the fire, dear, and warm yourself.

*(Bob Cratchit is heard singing.)*

**PETER:** Father's coming!

**BELINDA:** Let's play a prank. Hide, Martha, hide!

**MARTHA:** Where?

*(Belinda and Peter usher her out the room as Bob Cratchit enters with TINY TIM on his shoulder.)*

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Merry Christmas, my dears!

**TINY TIM:** Merry Christmas, Mother!

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Merry Christmas, Tim!

*(She takes Tiny Tim and places him in his chair by the fire.)*

**PETER:** Was it cold on your walk home, Father?

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Very. My words made little ghosts that flew up into the heavens! *(Looking around:)* Why, where's Martha?

**BELINDA:** I'm afraid she's not coming, Father.

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Not coming? Not coming for Christmas?

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** She had so much work at the milliner's. They sent someone 'round to tell the families that all the girls will be staying throughout the night and into tomorrow.

**PETER:** Perhaps longer!

**BOB CRATCHIT:** It hardly seems fair: working on Christmas Day!

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** There'll be other Christmases, Bob.

**BOB CRATCHIT:** But none like this one. Well, if Martha feels she must stay, we'll abide by her good judgment. But I did so want the family to be together.

**MARTHA:** (*Revealing herself:*) Here I am, Father! I cannot stand to see you disappointed, even for a joke!

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Then we are together, after all! It is to be a very merry Christmas!

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Peter, take Tim to wash-up. The goose will be ready any minute now!

**PETER:** Yes, Mother!

*(Peter puts Tiny Tim on his back.)*

**BELINDA:** Come, Martha, I've a secret something to show you that Mother and Father must not see!

*(They exit.)*

**TINY TIM:** Giddy-up, Peter!

*(Peter whinnies like a horse and they exit. Mrs. Cratchit resumes preparing dinner.)*

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Did Tim behave himself at church?

**BOB CRATCHIT:** He was as good as gold, and better. Somehow, he gets so thoughtful, and he thinks the strangest things. He told me, coming home, that he hoped people in church noticed him because he is crippled, and it might be pleasant for them to remember upon Christmas Day that our Lord made lame beggars walk and the blind see. Can you believe such a thing came from the heart of one so small, Alice?

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Tim's a special lad indeed.

**BOB CRATCHIT:** I forget sometimes that he's still just a boy. On the way home, I trotted around to the shop windows, where he gazed for the longest time at the toys. It didn't occur to me the sight would make him sad, instead of merry. So we trotted home, quick as we could.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Bob, you must be more careful. We mustn't remind him of what he doesn't have.

**BOB CRATCHIT:** You're right, of course. But how I wished I could have bought him every present in sight. Especially since this one might be his...last...

*(He begins to well up with tears.)*

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** Bob, you mustn't! Please don't. The children...

**BOB CRATCHIT:** I know. It's just...

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** We mustn't think of the future, Bob, only the present. And for now, Tim needs us to be strong.

*(Peter renters with Tiny Tim.)*

**PETER:** Mother! Father! Tell them what you did, Tim!

**TINY TIM:** I made it all the way to the washbasin by myself!

*(Cratchit grabs Tiny Tim and twirls him around.)*

**BOB CRATCHIT:** Of course you did! You're getting so strong and healthy! Soon you'll be climbing mountains and swimming the English Channel!

*(Martha and Belinda re-enter.)*

**MARTHA:** Where's the punch, Father? It's not Christmas without your special punch!

**BOB CRATCHIT:** That's a fact! What could I have been thinking to forget that?

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