

Scrooge Meets Shakespeare's Ghosts

*Adapted for the stage from **A Christmas Carol** by Charles Dickens*

by Ronnie Bell

Parody lyrics to familiar Xmas songs written by Ronnie Bell

Dramatis Personae: (in order of appearance)

Narrator, reads the story line that holds together the fabric of the scenes

Bob Cratchit, counting house clerk to Ebenezer Scrooge

Ebenezer Scrooge, owner and master of Scrooge and Marley, accountants

Nephew Fred, the adult child of Scrooge's late sister

Solicitor, solicits a Christmas donation for the poor from Scrooge

Jacob Marley, Scrooge's business partner, dead seven years, appears as a ghost/spirit

Three Sisters, Spirits from **Macbeth**, the Ghosts of Christmas Past, ageless witches

Fan, Scrooge's older sister, as a child

Fezziwig, Scrooge's boss when he was an apprentice, a kindly, jolly man of middle age

Mrs. Fezziwig, wife of Scrooge's boss, a kindly, friendly, sweet woman of middle age

Party Dancers, four more revelers who dance at Fezziwig's during a Christmas past

Belle, Scrooge's first love who broke off their relationship due to Scrooge's greed

Husband, Belle's life partner and father of their children

Hamlet's Father's Ghost, Spirit from **Hamlet**, Ghost of Christmas Present, invisible

Cratchits, four of the six Cratchit children, two below 5 & two around 10/12

M. Cratchit, Wife to Bob Cratchit, loving mother to all her children

Martha, oldest Cratchit daughter who apprentices for a seamstress

Tiny Tim, youngest son, crippled and braced on one leg, uses a crutch to walk

Caesar's Ghost, spirit of Julius Caesar haunting Brutus, Ghost of Xmas Future **p2**

Merchant 1, businessman discussing Scrooge's death in the future

Merchant 2, businessman discussing Scrooge's death in the future

Merchant 3, businessman discussing Scrooge's death in the future

Charwoman, chimney sweep who steals valuables from Scrooge at his future death

Laundress, washerwoman who steals valuables from Scrooge at his future death

Old Joe, undertaker who steals valuables from Scrooge at his future death

Sunday Girl, first person Scrooge encounters after "conversion"; gets Xmas turkey

Fred's Family, wife, sister and children

(Exterior scenes will be projected on the large screen LC in the space with some of the scenes played in front of the screen. The fireplace area RC will be used for all the interior scenes and dressed with minimal props and furniture to depict the scene, i.e. - Scrooge's Office, Bob Cratchit's House, Scrooge's Bedroom, etc.)

Scene 1: Scrooge's Office, the day before Christmas (Scene cards projected on screen slides)

(Bob Cratchit is seated R of the fireplace, trying to work on the accounts for the day for his boss, Mr. Scrooge. Mr. Scrooge, seated L of the fireplace, much closer to it than Cratchit, but observing his every move.)

Narrator: He was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of hovel, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it

looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box **p3** and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. So, Bob Cratchit put on his long white scarf, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which, of course, he failed.

(Scrooge's nephew, Fred, enters L [from kitchen] without Scrooge seeing him)

Fred: A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

Scrooge: Bah, Humbug!

Fred: You don't mean that, I am sure.

Scrooge: What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

Fred: What right have you to be dismal? You're rich enough.

Scrooge: Bah... Humbug!

Fred: Don't be cross, uncle...

Scrooge: What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart!

Fred: Uncle!

Scrooge: Nephew!...Keep Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine.

Fred: But you don't keep it.

Scrooge: Much good it has ever done you...

Fred: I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it! *(Cratchit unknowingly applauds and then pokes at the fire for warmth)*

- Scrooge: One more sound from you and you'll keep Christmas by losing your situation
- Fred: Don't be angry, uncle. Come dine with us tomorrow...
- Scrooge: Tell me, Fred, why did you get married?
- Fred: Because I fell in love-
- Scrooge: *(Growling mockingly)* Because you fell in love... good afternoon!
- Fred: You never came to see me at Christmas before I was married...
- Scrooge: Good afternoon!
- Fred: I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel but I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!
- Scrooge: Good afternoon! *(Fred exchanges pleasant Xmas greetings with Cratchit before being ushered out by Scrooge)* Cratchit makes 15 shillings a week, has a wife and family, and talks about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam. *(As Scrooge opens the door for Fred he says his lines to the audience and doesn't notice he is letting someone into his office.)*
- Solicitor: At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.
- Scrooge: Are there no prisons nor poorhouses?
- Solicitor: Plenty.
- Scrooge: And the Poor Laws are still in effect?
- Solicitor: Yes, but under the impression they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?
- Scrooge: Nothing!

Solicitor: You wish to be anonymous, how grand.

Scrooge: I wish to be left alone. I help to support the prisons and the poorhouses. Those who are badly off must go there.

Solicitor: Many would rather die.

Scrooge: Then they had better do that and decrease the surplus population. Good afternoon! *(Showing him the door)*

Narrator: Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold that nipped the nose with a touch of such weather that could freeze you in a minute. The owner of one frozen young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of "God bless you, merry gentlemen! May nothing you dismay!" - *(Scrooge seizes the ruler and beats the door with such ferocity that the singer flees in terror.)*

O Poorest Bob of Cratchitland

sung to the tune of "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

(Scrooge)

O, poorest Bob of Cratchitland

VERSE 1

You're lucky to have a job

If I give more then I'll be poor

Another dirty slob

Just work a little faster

You'll generate some heat

Go double time and you'll be fine

It might just reach your feet

(Bob Cratchit)

O, richest Scrooge of London Town

VERSE 2

I'm not really asking much

One piece of coal to stoke the fire

And warm my such and such

My fingers are all frozen

Too cold to write your books

O give me warmth at Xmas, sir

And not just dirty looks

(Scrooge and Cratchit cross to opposite sides of the stage and simultaneously repeat the verses in harmony) © 2017 Ronnie Bell

Scrooge: *(Moving toward Cratchit)* I suppose you'll want all day tomorrow.

Cratchit: If quite convenient, sir-

Scrooge: It is not convenient and not fair. If I took a half crown from your pay you'd feel ill used... *(Cratchit smiles weakly)*... but you don't think me ill used when I pay a full day's wages for no work.

Cratchit: It's only once a year, sir!

Scrooge: A poor excuse for picking my pocket... but I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here early the next morning!

Cratchit: Yes, sir!

Narrator: Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and Bob Cratchit, with the long ends of his white scarf dangling below his waist, went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could to play at blindman's-buff.

Scene 2: Scrooge's Bedroom, the night before Christmas *(ibid)*

Narrator: Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and spent the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers, which had once belonged to his deceased partner. It was a gloomy suite of rooms, where it had so little business to be, and was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in

it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold... *(Scrooge puts his key in the door.)* Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven years' dead partner that afternoon. So, then explain to me, if you can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any visible process of change—not a knocker, but Marley's face. *(He pauses with a moment's irresolution, before shutting the door. He looks cautiously behind it first, as if he half expects to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on.)*

Scrooge: Pooh, pooh! *(Slams the door closed and checks the room for spirits. He takes off his tie, puts on his dressing gown, slippers and nightcap and sits in front of the fireplace [with the mantel transformed to reflect his bedroom].)* Humbug! *(He hits a bell and the room is filled with the sound of bells followed by a clanking noise that sounded like chains being dragged. As the noise gets louder and closer he shouts to himself.)* It's humbug, still! I won't believe it! *(Jacob Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. His body was transparent.)* How now! What do you want with me?

Marley: Much!

Scrooge: Who are you?

Marley: Ask me who I was.

Scrooge: Who were you then?

Marley: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley... *(pause)* you don't believe in me.

Scrooge: I don't know.

Marley: Why do you doubt your senses?

- Scrooge: Because little things affect them- a slight disorder of the stomach could be some undigested beef, a blot of mustard or an underdone potato. You could be more gravy than grave. *(chuckles uncomfortably)* Do you see this toothpick?
- Marley: I do.
- Scrooge: But you are not looking at it.
- Marley: But I still can see it.
- Scrooge: Humbug I tell you! Humbug! *(Marley makes a frightening cry, shakes his chains with a dismal, annoying noise. Scrooge was so frightened he held his chair as if he could fall off. When Marley removes his bandage and his jaw drops to his chest, Scrooge falls on his knees and begs.)* Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?
- Marley: Do you believe in me?
- Scrooge: Yes, but why do you come to me?
- Marley: If your spirit does not go forth in life it is doomed to wander through the world.
- Scrooge: Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak some comfort to me!
- Marley: I have none for you. Your chain was as full and heavy as mine seven Christmas Eves ago! It is a very slow business.
- Scrooge: Seven years dead and traveling all the time?
- Marley: The whole time. No rest, no peace. The incessant torture of remorse. You, like me, are captive, bound and double-ironed. No space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused!
- Scrooge: But you were always good at business-
- Marley: Business?! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business! Hear me! My time is nearly gone.
- Scrooge: I will. Don't be hard upon me. Don't be flowery, Jacob.

Marley: I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope...

Scrooge: You were always a good friend to me.

Marley: You will be haunted by Three Spirits. Without their visits you cannot shun the path I travel. Expect the first visit tomorrow when the bell tolls one, the second the next night at the same hour and the third when the last stroke of midnight stops vibrating. For your own sake, remember what has passed between us!

It Came to Me as Clear as Day

sung to the tune of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

(Scrooge)

It came to me as bright as day **VERSE 1**

Upon a midnight clear

My former partner, Jacob M,

Alive upon the bier

He said what I do daily

Will make my future hell

What does he know? His shadow grows

Because I dream in fear

(Marley)

O, Scrooge please heed whate'er I say **VERSE 2**

Your time is running short

Each hour nigh will fill your eye

With insights of a sort

Come past, present and future

With slices of your life

Please see with more than just a snore

You might avoid the knife

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(Scrooge follows to the window, desperate in his curiosity, he looks out.)

Narrator: The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives and cried piteously at being unable to assist anyone. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever. Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home. He went straight to bed without undressing and fell asleep instantly.

Scene 3: Christmas Past, The Three Spirits of Macbeth *(Ad infinitum)*

Narrator: Marley's Ghost bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved within himself, after mature inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back again, like a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, "Was it a dream or not?" Scrooge lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven, this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power.

Scrooge: *(sounding out the bells as he hears then chime)* Ding, dong, ding dong. Ding, dong, ding, dong. Ding, dong, ding dong. Ding, dong, ding, dong. The hour of one itself... and nothing else.

Narrator: He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Lights flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn aside by... six hands!

Scrooge: Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold?

3 Sisters: We are. We are. We are.

Scrooge: Who are you?

3 Sisters: We are the Ghosts of Christmas past transported in time from a heath near Macbeth's castle.

We Three Cooks

sung to the tune of "We Three Kings"

(The Three Sisters)

We three cooks of witchery brew

VERSE 1

Stirring vile things in our stew

Tempting Scrooge with smells of childhood

Specially made for you

CHORUS

Oh- oh- eye of newt and toe of frog

Rotting fruit and skin of hog

Throw in just a touch of peppermint

Fleas from our dog

Now the trick's to get him to think

VERSE 2

Leave the bowl right here in the sink

He's so cheap he can't stand wasting it

O-O-C-D will drink

CHORUS

One small sip will force him to see

VERSE 3

Everything he wanted was free

Love and marriage, horse and carriage

Never again to be

CHORUS

Scrooge: *(Drinks the 3 Sisters' brew)* Macbeth's past?

3 Sisters: No. No. No. Scrooge's past. Rise. Rise. Rise and come walk with us. Bear a touch of our hands and you will see the past.

(The 3 Sisters twirl him around and wrap Scrooge up in their gowns and then unravel him to move him to the next vision)

Scrooge: *(Amazed and emotional)* I was bred in this place... I was a boy here.

3 Sisters: Your lip is trembling. What is that on your cheek?

Scrooge: A pimple... please lead me where you would.

3 Sisters: Do *you* know the way?

Scrooge: I could walk it blindfold.

3 Sisters: These are all the shadows of the past. They have no consciousness of us.

Narrator: The jocund travelers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past! Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes! What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

3 Sisters: The school is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still. *(Scrooge sobs and the 3 Sisters twirl and unravel him)*

Scrooge: Why, it's Ali Baba...one Christmas time when that child was left alone at home dear old honest Ali Baba came, and the Sultan and the Genie... and the Princess. There's the Parrot with green body and yellow tail, and Robin Crusoe and Friday running for his life to the little creek. Halloo! Hoop! Halloo! *(His mood changes drastically to sadness)*

3 Sisters: What's the matter?

Scrooge: Nothing... but I wish I had given something to the boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night.

3 Sisters: Let us see. Let us see. Let us see. Another Christmas. (*Scrooge paces back and forth in another room*)

Fan: I have come to take you home little brother- home, home, home!

Scrooge: (*as his boyhood self*) Home, Fan?

Fan: Yes, home for good forever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be. You're to be a man and are never to come back here. We're to be together all the Christmas long and have the merriest time in all the world.

Scrooge: (*as boy*) You are quite a woman, Fan!

Schoolmaster: (*offstage*) Bring down Master Scrooge's box!

Scrooge: Fan was always a delicate creature whom a breath might have withered... but she had a good heart.

3 Sisters: She died a woman but had one child...

Scrooge: Yes, my nephew, Fred.

(*Sfx of all the sounds of the city, a tumult of carts and coaches, peoples loud voices and another Christmas time*)

3 Sisters: Do you know this door?

Scrooge: Know it? I was apprenticed here! Why it's old Fezziwig. Bless his heart it's Fezziwig alive again.

Fezziwig: Hilli-ho! Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room. Hilli-ho! Chirrup, Ebenezer.

Narrator: Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ballroom, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night. (A fiddler comes in and plays English country dance music [or recorded] and all dance)

- Fezziwig: *(Claps his hands to stop the music and the dance)* Well done, well done!
- Narrator: There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Boiled Turkey, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the roast and oiled, when the fiddler struck up a new tune. Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them. *(Party Dancers & Fezziwigs dance)* When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas.
- 3 Sisters: A small matter to make these silly folks full of gratitude.
- Scrooge: Small...
- 3 Sisters: He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money... is that so much that they deserve such praise from the guests?
- Scrooge: But the Fezziwigs have the power to render us happy or unhappy, a pleasure or a toil. Their power lies in words and looks. The happiness they give is quite as great as if it cost a fortune. *(Quickly changes to sadness)*
- 3 Sisters: What is the matter? What is the matter? What is the matter?
- Scrooge: Nothing. I should just like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk Bob Cratchit.
- 3 Sisters: Our time grows short... quick- one shadow more...
- Scrooge: No more, no more. I don't wish to see it. *(But the 3 Sisters wrapped and twirled him as before and they were in another room)*
- Narrator: Now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a springtime in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.
- Husband: Belle, I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon. Guess who it was...
- Belle: How can I?... tut, don't I know... *(laughing)* Mr. Scrooge?

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

Scrooge: Spirits! Remove me from this place!

3 Sisters: Shadows of the past. Shadows of the past. Shadows of the past.

Scrooge: Leave me! Take me back! Haunt me no longer! *(Again, the 3 Sisters wrapped and twirled him as before and Scrooge was back in his bedroom, sunk into a heavy sleep)*

Scene 4: Christmas Present, Hamlet's Father's Ghost

Narrator: Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and center of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts.

Scrooge: Who are you?

HF Ghost: I am the Ghost of Christmas Present, Hamlet's Father. Look upon me! You have never seen the like of me before! I am known to provoke action in a world of inaction by holding up a mirror to your life.

Scrooge: Spirit, conduct me where you will. Last night I learned a lesson on compulsion. Tonight whatever you have to teach me, let me profit by it. *(Slide show/video of Dickens era Xmas scenes in London showing happy people enjoying their celebration of the holiday)* Spirit, why do you sprinkle your water on a poor person the most?

HF Ghost: Because they need it most, Ebenezer... I will take you to Bob Cratchit's house to show you what I mean. *(HF Ghost blesses the house)*

Cratchits: Here's Martha, mother. Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha.

M. Cratchit: Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are.

- Martha: We had a great deal of work to finish off last night and had to clear away this morning, mother!
- M. Cratchit: Well, never you mind so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear and have a warm, Lord bless ye!
- Cratchits: No, no! There's father coming. Hide, Martha, hide!
- Bob C: *(Carrying Tiny Tim on his shoulder)* Why, where's our Martha?
- M. Cratchit: Not coming.
- Bob C: Not coming! Not coming upon Christmas Day! *(Martha comes out from behind the closet door and runs into his arms while the Cratchits take Tiny Tim into the wash-house. After many Martha hugs were satiated...)*
- M. Cratchit: And how did little Tim behave?
- Bob C: As good as gold...and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day. *(TT's active crutch is heard along the floor and the Cratchits escort him back to his stool before the fire. Bob C. stirs a mixture of gin and honey and puts it on the hob to simmer while master Peter and the Cratchits fetch the goose and return in high procession. Then, M. Cratchit goes to get the pudding.)*
- Narrator: Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed. Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.
- Bob C: This is the greatest success achieved by your mother since we were married!

Narrator: At last the dinner was done, the fire swept, the tasted jug considered perfect and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. All the Cratchit family drew round the hearth and toasted Christmas.

Bob C; A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

Tiny Tim: God bless us, every one!

Scrooge: Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

HF Ghost: I see a vacant seat and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved.

Scrooge: No, no, oh no kind Spirit! Say he will be spared!

HF Ghost: If nothing changes in the future none will find him here. What then? *(pause)* If he be like to die, he better do it, and decrease the surplus population. *(Scrooge bends his head and looks at the ground in disgust with himself and his words repeated)*

Scrooge: Have they no refuge or resource?

HF Ghost: Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

Bob C: I give you Mr. Scrooge! The founder of the feast!

All: The founder of the feast!

M. Cratchit: I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

Bob C: My dear, the children! My dear, Christmas Day.

M. Cratchit: I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's... but not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year! Mr. Scrooge will be very merry and happy I have no doubt.

Bob C: To Mr. Scrooge!

All: The founder of the feast!

Love Will Always Bring Peace
sung to the tune of "Silent Night"

(Scrooge)

Silent night, lonely night,

VERSE 1

No one here to make it bright

All the money and things that I own

Little solace when I am alone

Never sleep in peace

Never sleep in peace

(Bob Cratchit and Family)

VERSE 2

Festive night, Tiny Tim

Bless the Lord for saving him

Round our table meek and mild

Celebrate the little child

Love will always bring peace

Love will always bring peace

(Sung together in harmony)

VERSE 3

(Bob Cratchit and Family)

(Scrooge)

Bless the man who gives us this bread

Bless the man who gives me his work

Scrooge is more than ink and lead

Why am I such a jerk?

Show him kindness everyday

Show him kindness everyday

He'll repay it before you can say

He'll repay it before you can say

Love will always bring peace

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(The clock strikes 12 and HF's Ghost disappears as Scrooge falls back into bed)

Scene 5: Christmas Future, Caesar's Ghost

- Narrator: Within a few minutes that felt like many days, Scrooge sensed the presence of Caesar's Ghost and fell down on his knees to detach its figure from the night and dispel its mysterious presence that filled him with solemn dread.
- Scrooge: Am I in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?
- CG: *(pointing forward with its hand)* These are the shadows of things that have not yet happened but will happen in time. *(Scrooge's legs begin to tremble uncontrollably)*
- Scrooge: *(Haltingly)* Ghost of the Future, I fear you more than any other Spirit... but I am prepared to bear your company... and do it with a thankful heart.
- Narrator: As they flew over London all the wonder and joy of Christmas activities spread out before them. Three merchants were talking on the street about an untimely death the night before and daring each other to go to the funeral.
- Merchant 1: What has he done with his money?
- Merchant 2: God knows. I thought he'd never die.
- Merchant 3: Left it to his company, perhaps- certainly not a penny to me.
- Merchant 2: It's likely to be a very cheap funeral.
- Merchant 1: Upon my life, I don't know anybody who would go to it. *(They all laugh)*
- Merchant 3: I'll offer to go if someone else will- but they have to give me a meal.
- Merchant 2: Cold, isn't it? *(Other merchants nod their heads)*
- Merchant 3: Seasonable for Christmas, though.
- Merchant 1: You're not a skater I suppose?
- Merchant 2: No, no, just something else to think of. Good morning. *(All tip their hats, nod their heads and disperse in separate directions.)*
- Narrator: CG and Scrooge moved quickly to one of the poorest sections of town an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognized its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly.

Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter...

Scrooge and the Spirit of CG came just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in, too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other...

Charw'man: Let the charwoman alone to be the first! (*Simultaneous*)

Laundress: Let the laundress alone to be the second! (*Simultaneous*)

Joe/U'taker: Let the undertaker's man alone be the third! (*Simultaneous*)

Charw'man: Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it! You get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as *he* was, I promise you, Joe.

Laundress: Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now.

Joe/U: His blankets?

Charw'man: Whose else's do you think?"

Laundress: He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say.

Joe/U: I hope he didn't die of anything catching? Eh?

Laundress: Don't you be afraid of that.

Charw'man: I ain't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did.

Laundress: Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one, too.

Charw'man: They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

Joe/U: What do you call wasting of it?

Charw'man: (*Laughing*) Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure.

Laundress: Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again.

Joe/U: If calico ain't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for Scrooge.

Narrator: Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded by the old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust, which could hardly have been greater, though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

Charw'man: Ha, ha!

Joe/U: *(Takes a flannel bag with money in it, doles out their several gains upon the ground)* This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha! *(3 scavengers exit)*

Scrooge: Spirit! *(Shuddering from head to foot)* I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven, what is this! *(The Spirit stops but its hand points elsewhere)* The house is yonder. Why do you point away? *(The inexorable finger keeps pointing as before)*

Narrator: Scrooge is jolted once again and wonders why and whither he goes accompanied by CG until they reach an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering. A churchyard. Here, then; the wretched man whose name he was now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death.

CG: You must go this way! *(The Spirit stands among the graves and points down to one)*

Scrooge: *(Advances towards it trembling)* Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question... Are these the shadows of the things that *will* be, or are they shadows of things that *may* be, only? *(Still CG pointed downward to the grave by which it stood)*

CG: Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead, but if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. It is thus with what I show you! *(The Spirit was immovable as ever)*

Scrooge: *(Creeping towards it, trembling as he went, and following the finger, finally reads the stone of the neglected grave)* EB-E-NE-ZER SCROO-OOOO-GE! *(On his knees)* Am I that man who lay upon the bed?

CG: *(Pointing finger from the grave to him, and back again)* Y-E-S!

Kneeling at My Graveside

sung to the tune of "In the Bleak Midwinter"

(Scrooge)

Kneeling at my graveside

VERSE 1

Looking at my life

I have been so cruel

I have been a knife

If I get another chance

I would turn around

Kneeling at my graveside

Staring at the ground

(Caesar's Ghost of Christmas Future)

Pointing to your graveside

VERSE 2

Looking at your death

Not much to redeem you

Time is running out

You may get another chance

Futures can be changed

Pointing to your graveside

Running round your brain

(Scrooge)

VERSE 3

Kneeling at my graveside

With a second part

I will honor Christmas

Keep it in my heart

Every day's another sun

I will make it shine

Kneeling at my graveside

I will drink the wine

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Scrooge: The Spirits of Past, Present and Future will strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons they teach. Please tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone.

Scene 6: Amends

- Scrooge: I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! (*Scrambling out of bed*) The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!
- Narrator: He was so fluttered and so glowing with good intentions that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. His conflict with Caesar's Ghost of Christmas Future left him wet with tears but giddy with happiness at his second chance.
- Scrooge: The shadows of the things that would have been may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will. They are not set in stone. I don't know what to do! (*Laughing and crying in the same breath*) I am as light as a feather. I am as happy as an angel. I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. (*Calling out of his window to the street below*) Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo! (*Music & bells pealing everywhere*) What day is it today?
- Sunday Girl: Today, sir? Why, It's Christmas Day, sir!
- Scrooge: (*To himself*) It's Christmas Day! (*To audience*) I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!
- S-Girl: Hallo!
- Scrooge: Do you know the Poulterer, in the next street at the corner?
- S-Girl: I should hope I do, sir.
- Scrooge: (*To audience*) An intelligent girl! A remarkable girl! (*To S-Girl*) Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?... not the little prize Turkey: the big one?
- S-Girl: The one as big as me, sir?
- Scrooge: (*To audience*) What a delightful girl! It's a pleasure to talk to her. (*To S-Girl*) Yes, my beauty!
- S-Girl: It's hanging there now.
- Scrooge: Is it? Go and buy it.

- S-Girl: That's a cruel joke... and on Christmas, sir.
- Scrooge: No, no, I am in earnest. Here's the money. Go and buy it and tell 'em to bring it here. Come back with the man and the turkey and I'll give you a shilling. Come back within five minutes and I'll give you half-a-crown for yourself. *(To audience)* I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. He sha'nt know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim!
- Narrator: Within minutes the poulterer comes back with the prize turkey...
- Scrooge: *(At his front door, to The Poulterer)* Why, my good man, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town. You must have a cab!
- Poulterer: *(Carrying prize turkey)* Yes, sir. Thank you Mr. Scrooge. You are very generous. *(Aside)* I never thought I'd be saying those words.
- Narrator: Scrooge dressed himself all in his best clothes and ran out into the street, greeting everyone *(in the audience)* with a "Happy Christmas" and a big smile.
- Scrooge: Good morning, sir. A Merry Christmas to you.
- Solicitor: Mr. Scrooge?
- Scrooge: Yes, that is my name and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. I hope you succeeded yesterday with your collections. Will you accept the goodness? *(Whispers in Solicitor's ear)*
- Solicitor: Lord bless me! *(Pause)* Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?
- Scrooge: Absolutely and not a farthing less because many back-payments are included.
- Solicitor: My dear sir, I don't know what to say to such generosity-
- Scrooge: Don't say anything, please. Come and see me. Will you come and see me?
- Solicitor: I will! *(Walking away in stunned silence)*
- Scrooge: Thank'ee. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!
- Narrator: Scrooge went to church and walked about the streets with pleasant greetings for all, patting children on the head, giving money to beggars, looking into kitchens of houses and up to the windows. All of this gave him great pleasure to his great

delight. After passing a particular door a dozen times he found the courage...
(Scrooge knocks on the door)

Scrooge: Fred!

Fred: Why bless my soul, who's that?

Scrooge: It is I, your Uncle Scrooge. Will you let me in for dinner, Fred? *(Fred just about shook his arm off with happiness as did the rest of the family when they saw him)*

Narrator: Wonderful party, excellent games, fabulous food, unparalleled unanimity, wonderful happiness. Dancing and singing galore! *(Fred's wife and family participate in all the festivities)*

It Feels So Much Better

sung to the tune of "Away in a Manger"

(Scrooge)

It feels so much better

VERSE 1

When you celebrate

All your troubles are little

All your pleasures are great

Embrace what you believe in

The positive way

You'll feel so much better

On Christmas Day

(Nephew Fred and Family)

It feels so much better

VERSE 2

When family is near

All your pleasures are plenty

All your problems are mere

You share your emotions

From past and from play

You'll feel so much better

On Christmas Day

It feels so much better

VERSE 3

To give than receive

All the good times are heightened

All the worries relieved

You love one another

As you're eager to say

You'll feel so much better

Everyday

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Narrator: The next morning Scrooge went to the office very early so he could catch Bob Cratchit coming to work late. Scrooge had his heart set on playing a good joke. Eighteen minutes after nine Bob Cratchit appeared.

Scrooge: *(Growling)* Hallo! What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

Bob C: I am very sorry sir. I am behind my time.

Scrooge: Yes, I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.

Bob C: It's only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.

Scrooge: I am not going to stand for this any longer. And therefore- *(leaping at Bob with the ruler in his hand)*- I am about to raise your salary! *(Bob turns from scared to incredulous)* A merry Christmas, Bob! *(Clapping him on the back)* A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you, for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of mulled wine, Bob!

(All characters enter in their last costume and begin an English country dance)

Narrator: Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset;

and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have that illness in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him. It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if anyone alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed...

Tiny Tim: *(On Bob C.'s shoulder)* God bless Us, Every One!

Come Sing a Song in Gentleness

sung to the tune of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

(Scrooge and Cast)

Come sing a song in gentleness	VERSE 1
And build your love with peace (Cast)	
And turn your hearts from cruelty	
Let all disasters cease (Cast)	
The only way to save the day	
Let empathy increase (Cast)	
O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy (All)	
O, tidings of comfort and joy! (All)	

(Bob Cratchit and Cast)

Let's hear it for the workers	VERSE 2
Who give their best each day (Cast)	
Who bring home all the goodies	
Regardless of their pay (Cast)	
The only way to save the day	
Let empathy increase (Cast)	
O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy (All)	
O, tidings of comfort and joy! (All)	

(Cast and Audience)

Come sing a song in gentleness	VERSE 3
By helping all in need (Audience)	
Let's not forget less fortunate	
And turn away from greed (Audience)	

The only way to save the day (All)

Let empathy increase (All)

O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy (All)

O, tidings of comfort and joy! (All)

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Curtain Calls

THE END