

**A SITI COMPANY CHRISTMAS CAROL  
(AKA RADIO CHRISTMAS CAROL)  
NEW ADAPTATION BY DARRON L WEST  
COMMISSIONED BY THE FISHER CENTER AT BARD COLLEGE  
2021**

**NARRATOR:**

Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker and the chief mourner signed the register of his burial. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon change for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know of my own knowledge what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined myself to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners in business for I don't know how many years. And upon his death Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole friend and his sole mourner.

But Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name however. There it stood years afterwards, above the warehouse door -- Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. People new to the business called Scrooge, Scrooge, and sometimes Marley. He answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh but 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.

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.

External heat and cold had little influence on him. No warmth could warm, no cold could chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say,

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

No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked of him the time. Even blindmen's dogs would tug their owners into doorways and wag their tails as though saying, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, master!"

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

Once upon a time, of all the good days in the year, upon a Christmas eve, old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak biting, foggy weather; and the city clocks had only just struck five, but it was quite dark already.

The door of Scrooge's office was open, that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who was in a dismal little cell beyond.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Shall I put another coal on the fire, Mr. Scrooge?

**SCROOGE:**

You shall not, Mr. Cratchit.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Not even a small one, sir?

*(doorbell jingles as Fred enters)*

**FRED:**

A merry Christmas, uncle!

**NARRATOR:**

It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew Fred.

**SCROOGE:**

Bah! humbug!

**FRED:**

Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that I am sure?

**SCROOGE:**

I do. Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer; If I had my way every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!

**FRED:**

Uncle!

**SCROOGE:**

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

**FRED:**

Keep it! But you don't keep it.

**SCROOGE:**

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

**FRED:**

There are many things from which I might have derived good by which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among them. But 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-travellers 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!

*(Bob applauds)*

**SCROOGE:**

Let me hear another sound from you, Bob and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! (to Fred) You're quite a powerful speaker sir it's a wonder you don't go into Parliament.

*(the doorbell rings as two solicitor's enter)*

**SOLICITOR 1:**

Scrooge and Marley's I believe?

**SOLICITOR 2:**

Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

**SOLICITOR 1:**

Mr. Marley or Mr. Scrooge?

**SCROOGE:**

Jacob Marley has been dead seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.

**SOLICITOR 2:**

Well we have no doubt his generosity will be represented by his surviving partner.

**SOLICITOR 1:**

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 this present time.

**SOLICITOR 2:**

Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

**SCROOGE:**

Are there no Prisons?

**SOLICITOR 1:**  
Plenty of Prisons.

**SOLICITOR 2:**  
Yes plenty.

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

**SOLICITOR 1:**  
They are.

**SOLICITOR 2:**  
I wish I could say they were not.

**SCROOGE:**  
The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour then?

**SOLICITOR 2:**  
Both are very busy, sir

**SCROOGE:**  
Oh I was afraid from what you said at first that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I'm so glad to hear it.

**SOLICITOR 1:**  
Mr. Scrooge, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth.

**SOLICITOR 2:**  
We choose this time because it is a time when Want is keenly felt and Abundance rejoices.

**SOLICITOR 1:**  
What shall we put you down for?

**SCROOGE:**  
Nothing.

**SOLICITOR 2:**  
You wish to be anonymous?

**SCROOGE:**  
I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the prisons and the workhouses they cost enough and those who are badly off must go there.

**SOLICITOR 1:**

Many can't go there and many would rather die.

**SCROOGE:**

If they would rather die they had better do it and decrease the surplus population.

Good day Gentlemen.

**SOLICITOR 2:**

But Mr. Scrooge!

**SCROOGE:**

I said Good day.

*(Solicitors exit)*

**FRED:**

Uncle! Don't be Cross!

**SCROOGE:**

What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? It's enough for a man to understand his own business and not interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Bah! Humbug

**FRED:**

Christmas a Humbug surely you don't mean that.

**SCROOGE:**

I do! What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough

**FRED:**

What right have you to be dismal? You're Rich enough. Don't be angry uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow. All the family will be there.

**SCROOGE:**

But why?

**FRED:**

Why?

**SCROOGE:**

Tell me Nephew why did you get married?

**FRED:**

Because I fell in love.

**SCROOGE:**

Because you fell in love!

**FRED:**

Uncle you never came to see me before I wed. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

**SCROOGE:**

Good afternoon.

**FRED:**

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

**SCROOGE:**

Good afternoon!!

**FRED:**

Uncle, I am sorry with all my heart to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel to which I have been a party. But I have made my visit in the spirit of Christmas and I will keep my Christmas spirit to the last. So a Merry Christmas uncle! And to you and your family Bob Cratchit.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Thank you sir and a Merry Christmas to you.

**SCROOGE:**

Good afternoon!

**FRED:**

And A Happy New-Year!

*(Fred exits)*

**SCROOGE:**

Good afternoon!!!

**SCROOGE:** *(to Bob)*

There you are with sixteen shillings a week and a wife and family talking about a Merry Christmas...Bah! I suppose you'll want all day tomorrow?

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

If quite convenient sir.

**SCROOGE:**

It's not convenient and it's not fair. If I were to dock you a half a crown you'd think it inconvenient and yet here I pay a day's wages for no work.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

It's only once a year sir.

**SCROOGE:**

A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Yes sir (*halfheartedly*) Merry Christmas Mr. Scrooge.

**SCROOGE:**

Bahhhh!

**NARRATOR:**

The office was closed in a twinkling and Bob with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat) ran home to his family as hard as he could pelt.

Scrooge meanwhile took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers went home to bed.

He lived in a home which had once belonged to his deceased partner Jacob Marley. It was old enough now and dreary enough for nobody to live in but Scrooge. The yard was so dark and gloomy that even Scrooge who knew every stone in the path to the front door had to grope along in the shadows.

Now it is a fact that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door of this house except that it was very large and that Scrooge had seen it upon arriving home every night these past seven years.

And yet Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door saw in the knocker, not a knocker//but Marley's face.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

//Ebenezer Scrooge...

**NARRATOR:**

It was not angry or ferocious but it looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look// with ghostly spectacles turned up upon its ghostly forehead.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

//Ebenezer Scrooge.....

**SCROOGE:**

Jacob Marley is that you?!

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Ebenezer Scrooge.....

**SCROOGE:**

Jacob Marley indeed! The man's dead, seven years dead tonight. Dead as a doornail.

**NARRATOR:**

But, as Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon the face became a knocker again.

**SCROOGE:**

Bah...Seven Years dead.

**NARRATOR:**

Now to say he was not startled or that his blood didn't run colder than even usual would be untrue. But, still he found his way inside and closed the door with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above and every cask in the cellar below appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, lit his candle and walked across the hall and up the stairs.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for it being very dark.

**SCROOGE:**

Darkness is cheap, and I like it!

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge walked through each of the rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face in the knocker to desire to do that... Sitting-room and bedroom were all as they should be.

**SCROOGE:**

Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; Nobody under the beds; nobody in the closets;

**NARRATOR:**

Quite satisfied he closed his heavy bedroom door and locked himself in; double-locked himself in which was not his usual custom.

Scrooge took off his cravat, put on his dressing-gown and his nightcap and sat down before the very low fire to take his gruel.

As he ate, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell that hung in the bedroom and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with another chamber in the building.

It was with great astonishment and with a strange, inexplicable dread that as he looked he saw this bell begin to swing. Soon it rang out loudly and so did every bell in the house.

This was succeeded by a clanking noise deep down below as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Ebenezer.....

**NARRATOR:**

The chains grew louder on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

It came on through the heavy door as a spectre passed into the room before his eyes.

**MARLEY'S GHOST ET AL:**

Ebenezer!

**NARRATOR:**

His body transparent Scrooge looked the phantom through and through and saw it standing before him. As Scrooge peered into its death-cold eyes he could see the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin.

**SCROOGE:**

How now! What do you want with me?

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Much!

**SCROOGE:**

Who are you?

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Ask me who I was.

**SCROOGE:**

Who were you then? You're very particular for a shade.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

In life I was your partner Jacob Marley. You don't believe in me?

**SCROOGE:**

I don't.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Why do you doubt your senses?

**SCROOGE:**

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

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

HEAR ME! My time is almost gone!

**SCROOGE:**

Mercy! Dreadful apparition why do you trouble me? Why do spirits walk the earth and why do they come to me?

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

It is required of every man that his spirit should walk among his fellow-humans and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life it is condemned to do so after death. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond the narrow limits of our business and now weary journeys lie before me! I am doomed to wander through the world and witness the misery I have caused and the happiness I cannot share. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day!

**SCROOGE:**

Why are you chained Jacob? Why?

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

I wear the chains I forged in life. I made it. Link by link and yard by yard.

**SCROOGE:**

Oh Jacob speak comfort to me.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

I have no comfort to give. Your chain was as long and heavy as this one seven Christmas's ago. You have labored on it since. It is a ponderous chain!

**SCROOGE:**

Say it's not so!

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Mark Me! My time is almost gone, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

**SCROOGE:**

But you were always a good man of business, Jacob!

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, 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. You have yet one last chance and hope of escaping my fate.

**SCROOGE:**

You were always a good friend to me Jacob.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Tonight you will be haunted by Three Spirits.

**SCROOGE:**

I -- I think I'd rather not.

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread.

**SCROOGE:**

This is the chance and hope of which you speak, Jacob?

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

Expect the first tonight when the bell tolls 10. Expect the second when the bell tolls 11. The third when the last stroke of Midnight has ceased to vibrate.

**SCROOGE:**

Jacob!

**MARLEY'S GHOST:**

My time is up! For your own sake Ebenezer remember what has passed between us and look to see me no more!

**NARRATOR:**

And with the raise of his hand from the window came confused noises in the air, sounds of lamentation and regret. Marley after listening for a moment joined in the mournful dirge and floated out into the night.

**SCROOGE:**

Jacob!

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge followed to the window and looked out.

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 (they might be guilty governments) were linked together... none were free. The misery with them all was clearly that they sought to interfere for good in human matters but had lost the power forever. Whether these creatures faded into the mist or the mist enshrouded them he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together and the night became as it had been.

**NARRATOR:**

And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the invisible world or the lateness of the hour, in much need of repose, Scrooge went straight to bed and fell asleep upon the instant.

**Stave Two: The First of the Three Spirits**

*(the chimes of a neighboring church toll 10 with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy alarm)*

**SCROOGE:**

Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

I am!

**SCROOGE:**

Who and what are you?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

**SCROOGE:**

Long past?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

No. Your past. The things that you will see with me are but shadows of the things that have been; they will have no consciousness of us.

**SCROOGE:**

Tell me Spirit what is your business with me?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Your welfare Ebenezer Scrooge.  
Rise and walk with me!

**SCROOGE:**

But it's cold and damp and I shall spoil my slippers

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

You shall not touch the earth Ebenezer Scrooge but course with me through the air.

**SCROOGE:**

But I am mortal spirit and liable to fall.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Bear but a touch of my hand and you shall be upheld in more than this!

**NARRATOR (EL):**

As the Spirit's words were spoken it laid a hand upon Scrooge's heart and they passed through the wall and stood upon an open country road with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day with snow upon the ground.

**SCROOGE:**

Good Heavens! I was a boy here!

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts and hopes and joys and cares he'd long forgotten!

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Your lip is trembling and what is that upon your cheek?

**SCROOGE:**

Bah it's nothing....

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Does this path before us seem familiar to you?

**SCROOGE:**

Familiar? Yes, I could walk it blindfold.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Strange to have forgotten it for all these years.

**NARRATOR (EL):**

As they walked, Scrooge recognized every gate and post and tree; until...

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit, it's my old school yard, I was a boy here!

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Yet the school is not quite deserted. Do you see Ebenezer? A solitary child neglected by his friends is there still, left alone with his books.

**SCROOGE:**

Yes spirit, it is I.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

He too was visited by spirits. The spirit of words.

**SCROOGE:**

Alone for the holiday, what else was there to do but turn to the comforts of the written word.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

But not this year, do you remember Ebenezer? There was comfort.

**FAN:**

Ebenezer! Ebenezer?

**SCROOGE:**

Fan! It's my little sister Fan.

**FAN:**

I've come to bring you home, dear brother. And then after the holidays, you shall go to London, where Father has found you a situation! You are to be apprenticed!

**SCROOGE:**

To be abandoned more like.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

But, you learned to save your shillings.

**SCROOGE:**

I learned to be self-sufficient, the stain of poverty would never stick to me.

**FAN:**

This Christmas you are to come home! We're to be together all Christmas long and have the merriest time in all the world.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered but, she had a large heart.

**SCROOGE:**

So she had. I'll not gainsay it, Spirit.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

She died a young woman and had as I think, Children?

**SCROOGE:**

One child.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

True, your nephew. Fred.

**SCROOGE:**

Yes Fred.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Come take my hand Ebenezer.

**NARRATOR:**

Although they but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city and the spirit stopped at a certain warehouse door.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Do you know this place?

**SCROOGE:**

It's Fezziwig's old counting house before it became mine. Fezziwig gave us our start. I was an apprentice here with Jacob.

**NARRATOR (EL):**

They went in.... At the sight of the old man --

**SCROOGE:** *(interrupting the Narrator)*

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

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Remember these are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.

**FEZZIWIG:**

Yo ho, there! Dick! Ebenezer!

**SCROOGE:**

Dick Wilkins, to be sure. My old fellow-prentice, bless me, yes! There he is. He was very much attached to me.

**FEZZIWIG:**

Yo ho, my boys! No more work tonight. Christmas eve Dick. Christmas Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up, before a man can say Jack Robinson! Clear away, my lads and let's have lots of room here!

**NARRATOR (EL):**

It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, the floor was swept, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug and warm and dry and bright a ball-room as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler. In came Mrs. Fezziwig. In came all! There were dances, and games. There was cake, and a great piece of Cold Roast. There were mince-pies, and plenty of beer.

When the clock struck half ten Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, shaking hands with every person individually as they departed and wishing them all a Very Merry Christmas.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

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

**SCROOGE:**

Small?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

He spent but a few pounds of your mortal money.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit. He had the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gave is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

What is the matter?

**SCROOGE:**

Nothing particular.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Something, I think?

**SCROOGE:**

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

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

Come, my time grows short Ebenezer, take my hand.

**NARRATOR**

For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now, a man in the prime of life. He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young woman in a black dress, in whose eyes there were tears.

**BELLE:**

It matters little, to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me

**YOUNG SCROOGE:**

What idol has displaced you?

**BELLE:**

A golden one.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:**

Would you have me worship poverty instead of wealth?

**BELLE:**

You fear the world too much. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you, have I not?

**YOUNG SCROOGE:**

What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, I've not changed towards you. Have I ever sought release from our engagement?

**BELLE:**

In words, no.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:**

In what then?

**BELLE:**

In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so. If you were free today, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a penniless girl? So I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were. Goodbye Ebenezer, may you be happy in the life you've chosen.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**

One shadow more.

**SCROOGE:**

No More! I don't wish to see it!

**NARRATOR:**

They were suddenly in another time and place: a room, not large or handsome but, full of comfort. Warming by the fire sat a woman with child. Belle was older now.

**SCROOGE:**  
Ohhh my dearest Belle.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**  
She found another love.

**JAMES:** (*entering*)  
Belle, I just saw an old friend of yours this evening.

**BELLE:**  
Who was it?

**JAMES:**  
Guess?

**BELLE:** (*laughing*)  
How can I? I don't know!

**JAMES:**  
Mr. Scrooge! I passed his office window and there was a candle lit, I could scarcely help seeing him. Can you imagine working late on a Christmas Eve? I hear his partner lies upon the point of death and there he sat. Alone. He's quite alone in the world I do believe.

**SCROOGE:**  
Spirit! remove me from this place. Show me no more.

**CHRISTMAS PAST:**  
I told you... I told you these were shadows of the things that have been, that they are what they are, do not blame me!

**SCROOGE:**  
Remove me. I cannot bear it! Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!

### **Stave Three: The Second of the Three Spirits**

**NARRATOR:**  
Scrooge awoke in his bedroom. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green that it looked a perfect grove. The leaves of holly, mistletoe and ivy reflected back the light as if many little mirrors had been scattered here and there and a mighty blaze roared in the fireplace. Heaped upon the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, great joints of meat, suckling pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense cakes, and great bowls of punch. On the throne sat a Giant who bore a glowing torch and who raised it high to shed its light on Scrooge.

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

Come -- Come and know me better man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the likes of me before!

**SCROOGE:**

No Never. Spirit, conduct me where you will. Tonight, if you have ought to teach me, let me profit by it.

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

Here little man, Touch my robe!

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge did as he was told and held it fast. The room and its contents all vanished instantly and they stood suddenly on the threshold of a humble home.

**SCROOGE:**

What place is this?

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

The home of your clerk Bob Cratchit.

**NARRATOR:**

With Scrooge holding tightly to his robe, the threshold transformed before their very eyes to the humble kitchen inside where a Christmas dinner was being prepared.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Where on earth is Martha?

**MARTHA:**

Here's Martha Mum!

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Bless your heart, how late you are and your hands they're like ice.

**MARTHA:**

I got away as soon as I could.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Come sit by the fire girl and have a good warm.

**MARTHA:**

They gave us all day tomorrow off.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

I wish I could say the same for your father. That miserable job is wearing him out.  
*(Bob and Tiny Tim enter)*

**MARTHA:**

Father!

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

My goodness it's cold out there.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Bob you are smiling like a Cheshire Cat.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Well it's not that often I get the day off to spend with my beautiful family. Together with you I have everything in the world a man could ask for.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit How can he say that? He only makes 20 shillings a week!

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

Sixteen.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

And how did little Tim behave?

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

As good as gold and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me coming home that he hoped the people saw him in the church because he was a cripple and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas day who made lame beggars walk and blind men see. Martha don't you think Tim looks better? He's getting stronger everyday.

**MARTHA:**

Yes papa.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit tell me will the boy die? Will Tim live?

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

I see a vacant seat in the corner and a crutch without an owner carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future the child will die.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit say it's not so.

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

What then! If he be like to die, he had better do it and decrease the surplus population! Man, if man you be at heart. Will you decide what men shall live and what men shall die? It may be you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child!

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Come, come everyone, dinner is served.

**NARRATOR:**

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

My what a delicious goose!

**NARRATOR:**

Its tenderness and flavor, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family.

**SCROOGE:**

What kind of scrawny beast did they partake of? Not a goose surely, it looked more like a swallow.

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

On 16 Shillings a week, it took Bob Cratchit half a year to put away for such a luxury.

**NARRATOR:**

~~But the pudding! O, a wonderful pudding. Bob Cratchit said he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage.~~ At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire stoked.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Let us raise a glass and toast to the founder of the feast.... Mr. Scrooge.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Ha! founder of the feast indeed, if he was here I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

My dear, the children. It's Christmas Eve.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Well I suppose it being Christmas we can toast the likes of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. I'll drink to his health for your sake and the Day's but not for his.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Come now, enough of these long faces! We won't let Mr. Scrooge cast a shadow over our celebration.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

Well, a long life to him and a merry Christmas and happy new year – he'll be very merry and happy, I've no doubt.

**THE CRATCHITS ALL:**

To Mister Scrooge!

*(shift)*

**FRED:**

He said that Christmas was a humbug! As I live! He believed it too!

*(Fred's party guests laugh)*

He's a comical old fellow Uncle Scrooge that's the truth and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment and I have nothing to say against him. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us.

**LILLY:**

I'm sure he's very rich Fred, at least you always tell me so.

**FRED:**

His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it.

**LILLY:**

Indeed, I have no patience with him but, under all that sourness I believe there's still a good man trying to get out.

**PARTY GUEST 1:**

A ghost of a good man.

**PARTY GUEST 2:**

It would take more than a ghost to scare it out of him.

**PARTY GUEST 3:**

With all due respect, your uncle Scrooge is a notorious skinflint, successful but a skinflint all the same. He'd send widows and orphans out into the street...

**SCROOGE:**

I would not!

**The SOLICITOR from earlier:**

When I was at his office earlier today asking for donations he said "I help to support the prisons and the workhouses they cost enough and those who are badly off must go there."

**PARTY GUEST 3:**

See! Widows and orphans cast out into the street!

**LILLY:**

Oh Ebenezer, his offenses will carry their own punishment indeed.

**FRED:**

Yes darling of course. But, it's our first Christmas together as man and wife so let us not speak ill of Ebenezer. A Merry Christmas to the old man wherever he is. He wouldn't take it from me but may he have it none the less.

*(the guest's applaud, with laughter and merriment)*

**NARRATOR:**

The whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw and far they went and many homes they visited but always with a happy end. In the almshouse, hospital and jail, in misery's every refuge the Spirit left his blessing and taught Scrooge his precepts.

*(a bell tower begins to chime)*

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

Hark! Almost midnight.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit wait, I see something strange and not belonging to yourself protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

It might be a claw for the flesh there is upon it. Look. Look here.

**NARRATOR:**

From the foldings of its robe the spirit brought forth two children. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shriveled hand, like that of age had pinched and twisted them. Wretched, abject and miserable they knelt at the Spirit's feet and clung upon the outside of its garment.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit are they yours?

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT:**

They are all human kind's. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware of them both but most of all beware this boy. For on his brow I see that written which is doom, unless the writing be erased.

**SCROOGE:**

Have they no refuge or resource?

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT AND ENSEMBLE:**

Are there no prisons?! ARE THERE NO WORKHOUSES!?  
Are there no prisons?! ARE THERE NO WORKHOUSES!?

**NARRATOR:**

Suddenly, the bell struck midnight and Scrooge looked about him for the Spirit and saw it no more. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of his old friend Jacob Marley and lifting up his eyes he beheld a solemn Phantom draped and hooded coming like a mist along the ground towards him. The very air through which this Spirit moved seemed to scatter gloom and mystery. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

**Stave Four: The Last of the Spirits**

**SCROOGE:**

Am I in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?  
Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any spectre I have seen.  
But as I know your purpose is to do me good and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was I am prepared to bear you company and do it with a thankful heart...

Will you not speak to me?

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

**NARRATOR:**

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them. But there they were in the heart of it; The Spirit stopped beside a knot of business men on the thoroughfare.

**BUSINESS MAN 1:**

No I don't know much about it either way. I only know he's dead.

**BUSINESS MAN 2:**

When did he die?

**BUSINESS MAN 1:**

Last night, I believe.

**BUSINESS MAN 3:**

Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

**BUSINESS MAN 1:**

Who knows?

**BUSINESS MAN 2:**

What has he done with his money?

**BUSINESSMAN 1:** *(they laugh and move along)*

I haven't heard, taken it to his grave I suspect. He hasn't left it to me, that's all I know.

**NARRATOR**

They found their way into an obscure part of town where Scrooge had never been but, he recognized its bad repute. Crime and filth reigned. It was here Scrooge and the Spirit darkened the door of the old corrupted pawnbroker known as Old Joe...

Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of Joe, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. Joe shouted out.

**OLD JOE:**

What have you got to sell? What have you got to sell?

**CHARWOMAN:**

Half a minute's patience Joe and you shall see. Every person 'as the right to take care of themselves....e' always did! Who's the worse for the loss of a few 'tings like these?

**OLD JOE:**

Not a dead man I suppose.

**CHARWOMAN:**

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

**OLD JOE:**

It's the truest word that ever was spoke.

**SCROOGE:**

Of whom do they speak Spirit? The case of this lonely man might be my own, my life tends that way now....

**CHARWOMAN:**

If I could have laid my hands on anything else, I would have. Open that bundle, Old Joe, and let me know the value of it.

**OLD JOE:**

What do you call this? Bed-curtains!? And his blankets?

**CHARWOMAN:**

He isn't likely to take cold without 'em. I dare say. 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 'e had, they'd have wasted it dressing that corpse in it, if it hadn't been for me.

**OLD JOE:**

He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead!

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit if there is a person in the town who feels emotion caused by this man's death, show that person to me I beseech you.

*(future gestures to reveal another scene)*

**CAROLINE:**

Is it good or bad?

**CHARLES:**

Bad

**CAROLINE:**

Oh dear, Charles are we quite ruined?

**CHARLES:**

No there is hope yet Caroline

**CAROLINE:**

If he relents there is! Nothing is past hope if such a miracle has happened.

**CHARLES:**

He is past relenting darling. He's dead.

**CAROLINE:**

He's dead!?! To whom will our debt be transferred?

**CHARLES:**

I don't know. But before that time, we shall be ready with the money. He was not merciful in life but he has been merciful in death despite himself.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit, please I beg of you let me see some tenderness connected with this man's death.

**NARRATOR:**

The spirit conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet. Scrooge looked here and there to find himself but he was nowhere to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit's house.

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. My little child. My little child.

I received the most extraordinary kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew Fred today Martha.

**MARTHA:**

What kindness did he give you, father?

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

Seeing I was just a little down you know he inquired what had happened to distress me. I told him about our dear Tim and upon hearing the news he said

**FRED:**

Mr. Cratchit, I'm heartily sorry for it, and sorry for your family. If I can be of service to you in any way, pray come to me.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:**

It really seems as if he had known our Tiny Tim and felt with us.

**SCROOGE:**

Spirit, I know our parting moment is close at hand. I know it, but I know not how. I shudder to ask but spirit tell me the man in whose death the couple rejoiced and the solicitors on the avenue spoke of? Whose belongings are now in the hands of Old Joe?

**NARRATOR:**

The Ghost of Christmas Future remained silent and conveyed him as before until they reached a churchyard.

**The Fugue**

**KM:**

Do You Remember?/ He'd Send Widows And Orphans Out Into The Street/

**VP:**

You Fear The World Too Much/Another Idol Has Displaced Me

**GM:**

Look To See Me No More/Why Do You Doubt Your Senses?/You Have Yet One Last Chance And Hope Of Escaping My Fate/He's Quite Alone In The World I Do Believe/He Frightened Everyone Away From Him When He Was Alive

**DONNELL:**

It's Only Once A Year Sir/ I Thought He'd Never Die/ He Hasn't Left It To Me That's All I Know/My Child. My Little Child

**AKIKO:**

You Wish To Be Anonymous?/ I Believe There's Still A Good Man Trying To Get Out/

**BARN:**

His Wealth Is Of No Use To Him. He Doesn't Do Any Good With It/He's Is Past Relenting He's Dead/

**EL:**

I Suppose We Can Toast The Likes Of Such An Odious, Stingy, Hard Unfeeling Man

**LEON:**

Come And Know Me Better Man/I See A Vacant Seat In The Corner and A Crutch Without An Owner/ I See That Written Which Is Doom/

**VP:**

May You Be Happy In The Life You Have Chosen

**NARRATOR:**

Here the wretched man whose name he had now to learn lay underneath the ground. The Spirit stood among the graves and pointed down to one.

**SCROOGE:**

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

If life's courses be departed from the ends will change! Say it is thus with what you show me!

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge crept towards the gravestone trembling as he went; and read upon the stone of a neglected grave his own name –

**NARRATOR AND ENSEMBLE:**

EBENEZER SCROOGE.

**SCROOGE:**

No, Spirit! O no, no! Spirit! hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this if I am past all hope? Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me by an altered life.

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons they teach.

**NARRATOR:**

The Spirit raised its spectral hand and with a mighty sweep the winds moved round as if the heavens were whirling from their firmament. Scrooge was lost to a powerful sensation that moved him like a wave from the darkening sea. As he gave into the dreadful force, his strength drained slowly from him and the darkness shrank and dwindled down.... into a bedpost.

**SCROOGE:**

I am here! I'm not past all hope! Have the spirits done it all in one night!? I have no idea what day it is!? How long I've been with the Spirits?! Oh thank you Jacob, the shadows of the things that would be have been dispelled! Hooooo! I am as giddy as a drunken man. I'm light as a feather. I'm as merry as a schoolboy!

**NARRATOR:**

Running to the window, Scrooge opened it and put out his head. No fog, no mist, no night; just clear, bright, stirring, golden day.

**SCROOGE:**

Young Man! Yoo Hoo! Young Man! What's today?

**TURKEY BOY:**

EH?

**SCROOGE:**

What's today my fine fellow?

**TURKEY BOY:**

Today!?! Why, it's CHRISTMAS DAY.

**SCROOGE:**

It's Christmas day I haven't missed it! Wait, my fine fellow!  
Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street? The one at the corner?

**TURKEY BOY:**

I should hope I did.

**SCROOGE:**

An intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there? Not the little prize Turkey, the big one?

**TURKEY BOY:**

The one as big as me?

**SCROOGE:**

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

**TURKEY BOY:**

It's hanging there now.

**SCROOGE:**

Go and buy it. I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it here that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I'll give you half a crown! I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's! He sha'n't know who sent it.

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge dressed himself "all in his best" and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, that three or four good-humored fellows said;

**ASSORTED ENSEMBLE MEMBERS CALL OUT:**

Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!

*(the solicitors from earlier approach Scrooge)*

**SCROOGE:**

Oh good! Gentlemen excuse me. You left me yesterday before I had good sense to contribute to your worthy cause. Would you please accept my donation of *(whispers in their ear)*.

**SOLICITOR 1:**

Mr. Scrooge! But....

**SOLICITOR 2:**

Your generosity knows no bounds good sir!

**SCROOGE:**

A great many back payments are included in it, I assure you. I only ask that you frequent my establishment more often!

**SOLICITORS 1 & 2:**

Oh we will!

**SCROOGE:**

Thank you both for all that you're doing and Merry Christmas!

**SOLICITORS 1& 2:**

And Thank YOU! Merry Christmas Mr. Scrooge.

**NARRATOR**

In the afternoon, Scrooge turned his steps towards his nephew Fred's house. He passed the door a dozen times before he had the courage to go up and knock.

**FRED:**

Ebenezer? Why bless my soul!

**SCROOGE:**

Fred, It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. Would you please forgive a foolish old man? I have come to dinner. Will you let me in?

**FRED:**

Let you in? Come, come out of the cold this instant!

**NARRATOR:**

Scrooge felt at home in 5 minutes. Wonderful party, wonderful games, won-der-ful happiness was had by all.

Oh, But Scrooge was early at the office next morning. O, he was early there. If he could only be there first and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon. And he did it. The clock struck nine.

**SCROOGE:**

No Bob.

**NARRATOR**

A quarter past.

**SCROOGE:**

No Bob.

**NARRATOR**

Bob was a full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the counting house.

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

**SCROOGE:**

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

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

I am very sorry sir. I am behind my time.

**SCROOGE:**

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

**BOB CRATCHIT:**

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

**SCROOGE:**

Now, I'll tell you what my friend. I am not going to stand for this sort of thing any longer.

And therefore -- and therefore I am about to raise your salary!

A merry Christmas, Bob!

A merrier Christmas, Bob than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary good fellow and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we shall discuss your affairs this very afternoon.

**NARRATOR**

Scrooge was better than his word.

He did it all, and infinitely more; to every Cratchit child 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, or any other good old city, town or borough in the good old world.

Some people laughed to see the alteration in him but his own heart laughed and that was quite enough for him.

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

*The End*