

**A Christmas Carol**  
**by**  
**Kevin D. Ferguson**

**Adapted from the story by Charles Dickens**

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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## DEDICATION

*A Christmas Carol* is dedicated to my comrades Thom and Mindi Penn at Atlantic Stage who encouraged me to adapt the classic tale by Charles Dickens, to my parents Doug and Gerry Ferguson who have always supported me, and to my best friend Trudy Sauvageau for her continued love and patience.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Todd Ristau, founder of the Playwrights Lab at Hollins University without which I would not be a playwright. Also Bob Moss, founder of Playwrights Horizons, who every time I thought I was done with this adaptation pushed me to revise and revise some more until I really was.

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*A Christmas Carol* was first performed in Myrtle Beach, SC on November 28, 2014 at Atlantic Stage.

STEVE HARLEY as EBENEZER SCROOGE

T. KIRK TRUSLOW as BOB CRATCHIT

MICHAEL KANE as FRED/APPRENTICE SCROOGE

SCOTT MAXWELL as JACOB MARLEY/GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

ERIN DOOLEY as FRED'S WIFE/CAROLINE/QUARTET

JASON ADAMS as GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT/FEZZIWIG/OLD JOE

CONNOR HOLCOMBE as DICK WILKINS/EDWIN/OTHERS

KRISTA GIERLACH as BELLE/QUARTET/OTHERS

ALYSHA CIENIEWICZ as MRS. CRATCHIT/MRS. FEZZIWIG/OTHERS

ELLA YANCEY as TINY TIM/YOUNGEST SCROOGE

KORILYN HENDRICKS as MARTHA CRATCHIT/GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST/OTHERS

ASHTON MEYER as LITTLE FAN/BELINDA CRATCHIT

JACK PENN as YOUNG SCROOGE/PETER CRATCHIT/IGNORANCE

LILA YANCEY as LUCY CRATCHIT

MIA YANCEY as MARY CRATCHIT/WANT

KENNY ROBINSON as ENSEMBLE/QUARTET

LEIGH SAUVAGEAU as ENSEMBLE/QUARTET

*Directed by* MINDI PENN

SCENIC DESIGNER.....STEPHEN CRAIG  
LIGHTING DESIGNER.....LANCE O'CONNOR  
SOUND DESIGNER.....JOE ROCHE  
COSTUME DESIGNER.....CHRISTY O'CONNOR  
PROPS DESIGNERS... MARJORIE CRAIG MITCHELL/SANDI SHAKELFORD  
DIALECT COACH.....GWENDOLYN SCHWINKE  
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER.....MARJORIE CRAIG MITCHELL

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 adult males, 4 adult females, 2 juvenile males, 1 juvenile female with doubling)

EBENEZER SCROOGE

BOB CRATCHIT

POOR PASSER-BY 1; GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST; MARTHA CRATCHIT;  
CHARWOMAN

POOR PASSER-BY 2; FEZZIWIG; GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT; OLD JOE

POOR PASSER-BY 3; MRS. FEZZIWIG; MRS. CRATCHIT; MRS. DILBUR THE  
LAUNDRESS

STREET URCHIN 1; YOUNGEST SCROOGE; TINY TIM CRATCHIT; IGNORANCE

STREET URCHIN 2; LITTLE FAN SCROOGE; BELINDA CRATCHIT; WANT

STREET URCHIN 3; YOUNG SCROOGE; PETER CRATCHIT

POULTERER; JACOB MARLEY; GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR; DICK WILKINS; THE UNDERTAKER'S MAN

QUARTET MEMBER 1; FRED; APPRENTICE SCROOGE

QUARTET MEMBER 2; BELLE; CAROLINE

QUARTET MEMBER 3; GENTLEMAN; BUSINESS MAN TWO

QUARTET MEMBER 4; FRED'S WIFE

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## SETTINGS

A Victorian Street Scene at Christmas

Scrooge's Office

Scrooge's Door and Bedroom

Cratchit Dining Room

Fred's Home

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Traditional Victorian Christmas Carols are utilized, including:

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman

Deck the Halls With Boughs of Holly

Good King Wenceslas

Away in a Manger

Here We Come a-Wassailing

What Child is This?

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

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## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*A cold Christmas Eve afternoon in Victorian London. POOR PASSERS-BY and STREET URCHINS hungrily peek through windows of shops, including a Poulterers'. THE POULTERER has a large goose on display in his window, which seems out of reach to the on-lookers. EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR sells gruel from a cart, for which the Passers-by haggle. A QUARTET of carolers sings a traditional Victorian Christmas Carol, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."*

**QUARTET.** IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR  
THAT GLORIOUS SONG OF OLD  
FROM ANGELS BENDING NEAR THE EARTH  
TO TOUCH THEIR HARPS OF GOLD  
PEACE ON THE EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN  
FROM HEAVEN'S ALL GRACIOUS KING  
THE WORLD IN SOLEMN STILLNESS LAY  
TO HEAR THE ANGELS SING

YET WITH THE WOES OF SIN AND STRIFE  
THE WORLD HAS SUFFERED LONG  
BENEATH THE ANGEL-STRAIN HAVE ROLLED  
TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF WRONG  
AND MAN, AT WAR WITH MAN, HEARS NOT  
THE LOVE SONG WHICH THEY BRING  
O HUSH THE NOISE, YE MEN OF STRIFE  
AND HEAR THE ANGELS SING

AND YE, BENEATH LIFE'S CRUSHING LOAD,  
WHOSE FORMS ARE BENDING LOW  
WHO TOILS ALONG THE CLIMBING WAY

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WITH PAINFUL STEPS AND SLOW  
LOOK NOW! FOR GLAD AND GOLDEN HOURS  
COME SWIFTLY ON THE WING  
O REST BESIDE THE WEARY ROAD  
AND HEAR THE ANGELS SING

### SCENE 2

*SCROOGE ENTERS like an ill wind, scattering people as he winds his way through the street to his office.*

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** Scrooge!

**QUARTET MEMBER ONE.** Squeezing.

**QUARTET MEMBER TWO.** Wrenching.

**QUARTET MEMBER THREE.** Grasping.

**QUARTET MEMBER FOUR.** Clutching.

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** Scrooge!

**QUARTET MEMBER ONE.** Nobody ever stopped him on the street to say:

**QUARTET MEMBER TWO.** *(Mockingly, to anyone other than Scrooge.)* ‘My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?’

**QUARTET MEMBER THREE.** No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle.

**QUARTET MEMBER FOUR.** No children asked him what it was o’clock.

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** No man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge.

**QUARTET MEMBER ONE.** But what did Scrooge care?

**QUARTET MEMBER TWO.** It was the very thing he liked. *(Scrooge scuttles along the street, arriving at a faded painted sign which reads “Scrooge and Marley.” The Quartet Members gossip with one another about Scrooge.)*

**QUARTET MEMBER THREE.** Scrooge’s partner, old Marley, was as dead as a doornail.

**QUARTET MEMBER FOUR.** The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it.

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**QUARTET MEMBER THREE.** Mind! I don't mean to say that I know what there is particularly dead about a doornail. But there is no doubt that Marley was dead.

**QUARTET MEMBER ONE.** Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years.

**QUARTET MEMBER TWO.** Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the door: Scrooge and Marley.

**QUARTET MEMBER THREE.** And there is no doubt that Marley was dead.

### SCENE 3

*The Quartet toils pulling chains until a cramped office appears with two desks, one tall and one low, with a small coal stove and a small coal bin with a shovel between the desks. Scrooge sits at the taller desk and counts money and enters figures in a ledger with a quill pen. BOB CRATCHIT sits already at the smaller, lower desk writing letters by the stingy light of a single candle. He shivers and rises to put a piece of coal from the bin into the stove. Scrooge stares at him witheringly until he replaces the shovel and sits without adding any coal to the stove, cupping his hands around his tiny candle for warmth. FRED comes cheerily into the office.*

**FRED.** A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

**SCROOGE.** Bah! Humbug!

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

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

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

**SCROOGE.** Bah! Humbug.

**FRED.** Don't be cross, uncle!

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

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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 the rest. But 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! *(Bob Cratchit applauds the speech, inadvertently blowing out his candle, and busies himself relighting it under Scrooge's withering gaze.)*

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

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

**SCROOGE.** I'll dine with you when hell freezes over.

**FRED.** But why? Why?

**SCROOGE.** Why did you get married?

**FRED.** Because I fell in love.

**SCROOGE.** Because you fell in love! Good afternoon!

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

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon.

**FRED.** I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in honor of

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Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas spirit to the last. So a Merry Christmas, uncle!

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon!

**FRED.** And a Happy New year!

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon!

**FRED.** Merry Christmas, Bob!

**BOB CRATCHIT.** Merry Christmas to you, sir.

**SCROOGE.** There's another fellow. My clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a Merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam. *(As Fred leaves, a GENTLEMAN enters the office with a list in-hand, removes his hat, and bows to Scrooge.)*

**GENTLEMAN.** Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

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

**GENTLEMAN.** No doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner. *(Scrooge delivers his withering gaze to an oblivious Gentleman.)* 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?

**GENTLEMAN.** Plenty of prisons.

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

**GENTLEMAN.** They are. Still. I wish I could say they were not. Both very busy, sir.

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

**GENTLEMAN.** Under the impression that they scarcely furnish a 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!

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**GENTLEMAN.** You wish to be anonymous?

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

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

**SCROOGE.** If they would rather die they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides – excuse me – I don't know that.

**GENTLEMAN.** But you might know it.

**SCROOGE.** It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, sir! *(With a sympathetic nod to Bob Cratchit, the Gentleman leaves the office. STREET URCHIN ONE, poorly dressed and hungry, sings "God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman" outside Scrooge's office door.)*

**STREET URCHIN ONE.** GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMAN  
LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY  
REMEMBER, CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR  
WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY  
TO SAVE US ALL FROM SATAN'S POWER  
WHEN WE WERE GONE ASTRAY  
O TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY  
COMFORT AND JOY  
O TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY

*(Scrooge scowls increasingly at his desk. Bob Cratchit rises to greet the boy, but Scrooge's withering gaze fixes him back in his seat. Scrooge marches to the office door and stares out at the boy.)*

**STREET URCHIN ONE.** *(Hesitantly.)* Merry Christmas, sir. *(The boy shyly holds out his hat to Scrooge.)*

**SCROOGE.** Begone, boy! Before I summon the constabulary! *(The boy flees as Scrooge turns to Bob Cratchit, who extinguishes his candle and rises.)*

**SCROOGE.** You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?

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

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

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**BOB CRATCHIT.** Well, sir-

**SCROOGE.** And yet, you don't think me ill-used, when 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.** Oh, I will sir. Thank you, sir. *(Bob Cratchit dashes out into the cold, arms wrapped tightly about himself because he has no over-coat. Scrooge bundles himself up in a great-coat and leaves also.)*

### SCENE 4

*The Quartet pushes or pulls the office out of sight as Scrooge approaches Edwin the Street Vendor.*

**SCROOGE.** Have you the money you owe, Edwin?

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** Just a few days more, Mr. Scrooge. My wife Caroline has been very ill, and we needed the money for the medicine.

**SCROOGE.** You are a few days in arrears already, sir.

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** Just until the New Year, Mr. Scrooge. I promise I'll have it for you then.

**SCROOGE.** Have it for me tomorrow. Not a day later.

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** But tomorrow's Christmas Day!

**SCROOGE.** Have it all by tomorrow, or it's the workhouse for you until you pay your debts as a man should do! Or would you rather I summon the constable today?

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** No, sir. Thank you, Mr. Scrooge.

**SCROOGE.** Give me a tankard of that gruel.

**EDWIN THE STREET VENDOR.** Yes, Mr. Scrooge. *(Scrooge takes his gruel and walks home, followed by the Quartet, who gossip.)*

**QUARTET MEMBER ONE.** A melancholy dinner of gruel.

**QUARTET MEMBER TWO.** From a melancholy street vendor.

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**QUARTET MEMBER THREE.** And a melancholy walk to an old and gloomy house.

**QUARTET MEMBER FOUR.** Which nobody lives in but Scrooge. (*Scrooge arrives at a large door with a distinctive door knocker. He fishes a large key out of his great-coat pocket. The door knocker opens its eyes, and Scrooge drops his key in alarm.*)

**JACOB MARLEY.** (*Wheezing.*) Scrooge. (*The door knocker closes its eyes. Scrooge places the key in the lock and turns it, opening the door.*)

**SCROOGE.** Pooh, pooh! (*The Quartet strains pulling chains, hauling Scrooge's bedroom into sight.*)

**QUARTET MEMBER ONE.** Scrooge lives in chambers which belonged to old Marley.

**QUARTET MEMBER TWO.** A gloomy suite of rooms, old and dreary.

**QUARTER MEMBER THREE.** Sounds resound through the old house like thunder. Every room has a separate peal of echoes.

**QUARTET MEMBER FOUR.** Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge likes it. (*Scrooge gropes his way into his bedchamber with his gruel. In his bedchamber is a chair next to an unlit fireplace, a grandfather clock, and a four-poster bed with bed-curtains. Scrooge quickly removes his great-coat and throws off his outer garments. As he puts on each article of night clothing [dressing gown, slippers, and a nightcap which are laying upon the bed], the sounds of creaking wood are heard. He freezes at each sound, which cease when he is still. Scrooge sits in his chair and sips hips gruel.*)

**SCROOGE.** Humbug! (*Knocking begins. Scrooge ignores the knocking. Knocking ceases. The grandfather clock chimes. The clock chimes louder and faster. The hands on the clock spin. Scrooge ignores it. The clock chiming and hands spinning cease. A clanking noise, as if a heavy chain were being dragged closer and closer, begins.*) It's humbug still! I won't believe it! (*The fireplace flares, then extinguishes. MARLEY ENTERS, a long chain of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrapped around him and dragging behind, a kerchief wrapped about his head and chin.*)

**MARLEY.** Scrooge.

**SCROOGE.** How now! What do you want with me?

**MARLEY.** Much!

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**SCROOGE.** Who are you?

**MARLEY.** Ask me who I was.

**SCROOGE.** Who were you then? You're particular, for a ghost.

**MARLEY.** In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

**SCROOGE.** Can you- can you sit down?

**MARLEY.** I can.

**SCROOGE.** Do it, then.

**MARLEY.** *(Sitting in Scrooge's chair.)* You don't believe in me.

**SCROOGE.** I don't.

**MARLEY.** What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?

**SCROOGE.** I don't know.

**MARLEY.** Who do you doubt your senses?

**SCROOGE.** Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are! *(Marley stares witheringly at Scrooge, the same withering gaze Scrooge gives others.)* It's the gruel. You see this gruel.

**MARLEY.** I do.

**SCROOGE.** You are not looking at it.

**MARLEY.** But I see it notwithstanding.

**SCROOGE.** It is spoiled. I have but to swallow the rest, and no doubt be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you! Humbug! *(Marley swiftly rises and confronts Scrooge with a frightful cry, shaking his chains. Scrooge falls to his knees and covers his face with his hands.)* Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

**MARLEY.** Man of the worldly mind! Do you believe in me or not?

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

**MARLEY.** It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; And if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander the world-oh, woe is me! Doomed to witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness! *(Marley moans and shakes his chains again.)*

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**SCROOGE.** You are fettered. Tell me why?

**MARLEY.** I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?

**SCROOGE.** Spirit-

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

**SCROOGE.** Jacob, Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!

**MARLEY.** I have none to give. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house- mark me! In life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!

**SCROOGE.** You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.

**MARLEY.** Slow!

**SCROOGE.** Seven years dead, and travelling all the time!

**MARLEY.** The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

**SCROOGE.** You travel fast?

**MARLEY.** On the wings of the wind.

**SCROOGE.** You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years.

**MARLEY.** (*Moaning and shaking his chains more piteously.*) Oh! Captive, bound, and double-ironed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, wherever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! Such was I!

**SCROOGE.** But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

**MARLEY.** Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business! (*Holding up his chains.*) At this time of the rolling year, I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!

**SCROOGE.** Jacob-

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**MARLEY.** Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

**SCROOGE.** I will. But don't be hard upon me! Don't be, Jacob! Pray you!

**MARLEY.** How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day.

**SCROOGE.** Sat beside me, Jacob?

**MARLEY.** That is no light part of my penance. I am here tonight to warn you, that you may have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

**SCROOGE.** You were always a good friend to me. Thank'ee!

**MARLEY.** You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

**SCROOGE.** Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

**MARLEY.** It is.

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

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

**SCROOGE.** Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

**MARLEY.** Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us! *(Marley leaves Scrooge. Ghostly wailing fills the air, quieting into the moan of the wind. Scrooge rushes to bed and pulls the bed-curtains closed. BLACKOUT.)*

### SCENE 5

*The grandfather clock strikes "One." A hand, illuminated in the darkness, reaches for Scrooge's bed-curtains and pulls them open, revealing Scrooge huddled in bed. THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST, dressed in white trimmed with summer flowers and a belt of holly, radiates a clear bright light.*

**SCROOGE.** Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

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

**SCROOGE.** Who, and what are you?

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

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**SCROOGE.** Long past?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** No. Your past.

**SCROOGE.** Your light it blinds me. Could you extinguish it?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** What! Would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? It is not enough that you are one of those whose passions force me through whole trains of years to dim my light?

**SCROOGE.** You pardon, Spirit. I meant no offense. What business brings you here?

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

**SCROOGE.** I am much obliged, but would not a night of unbroken rest be more conducive to my welfare?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Your reclamation, then. Take heed! (*Extending a hand to Scrooge.*) Rise! Walk with me!

**SCROOGE.** (*Reluctantly rising and taking the Spirit's hand.*) I am but mortal.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Bear but a touch of my hand there- (*Touching Scrooge's heart.*) – and you shall be upheld in more than this. (*Scrooge's bedroom vanishes in a fog. Figures from the past appear and disappear out of the fog.*)

**SCROOGE.** Good Heaven! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!

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

**SCROOGE.** Nothing. Spirit, lead me where you will!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** You recollect the way?

**SCROOGE.** Remember it! I could walk it blindfold.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Strange to have forgotten it for so many years! Let us go on. (*Children's voices and children's laughter fill the air, wishing each other "Merry Christmas" until fading away.*) These are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us. The school is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

**SCROOGE.** (*YOUNGEST SCROOGE sits alone, reading a book.*) Poor boy! I wish- but it's too late now.

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

**SCROOGE.** Nothing. Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol last night. I should like to have given him something; that's all.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Let us see another Christmas. (*With a wave of the Spirit's hand youngest Scrooge disappears and YOUNG SCROOGE appears. LITTLE FAN darts in and hugs and kisses him.*)

**FAN.** I have come to bring you home, dear brother! To bring you home, home, home!

**YOUNG SCROOGE.** Home, little Fan?

**FAN.** Yes! Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; And sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man! And are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in the world.

**YOUNG SCROOGE.** You are quite a sister, little Fan! (*Fan delightedly drags Young Scrooge away.*)

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered! But she had a large heart!

**SCROOGE.** So she had. You're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** She dies a woman, and had, as I think, children.

**SCROOGE.** One child.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** True. Your nephew.

**SCROOGE.** Yes.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** (*FEZZIWIG appears.*) Do you know this place?

**SCROOGE.** Know it! I was apprenticed here!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Yes.

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

**FEZZIWIG.** (*Clapping his hands.*) Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick! (*APPRENTICE SCROOGE and DICK WILKINS rush in.*)

**SCROOGE.** Dick Wilkins, to be sure! Bless me, yes. There he is. He was vey much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!

**FEZZIWIG.** Yo ho, my boys! No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters closed and the tables set before a man can say Jack Robinson! (*Apprentice Scrooge and Dick Wilkins rush out again.*)

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

*Fezziwig climbs on something, struggling to hang a sprig of mistletoe. MRS. FEZZIWIG ENTERS.)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG.** Mr. Fezziwig! Come down from there at once before you do yourself an injury upon Christmas Eve. At once, I say! Before you break an arm or a leg or a-

**FEZZIWIG.** Very well, my dear Mrs. Fezziwig. Come and lend me a hand then. *(Mrs. Fezziwig lends him a hand; he promptly kisses her.)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG.** Oh, you are quite a ridiculous, quite an impossible fellow! Well, we shall have good luck in the coming year, I suppose!

**FEZZIWIG.** And one can never have too much luck, my dear. Or too many kisses! *(Mr. Fezziwig moves in for another kiss, which Mrs. Fezziwig adroitly dodges.)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG.** We should save the mistletoe for the young, Mr. Fezziwig, A certain young apprentice and a certain young lady, perhaps? Don't you agree? And by the by, I am no longer standing under the mistletoe.

**FEZZIWIG.** *(Fezziwig swiftly pulls a sprig of mistletoe from a pocket and hold it over their heads.)* Ah, but a wise man prepares for any eventuality! And I believe my apprentices can see to their own mistletoe! *(He kisses her again.)*

**MRS. FEZZIWIG.** And I believe you will be too tired for dancing if you carry on this way!

**FEZZIWIG.** Too tired for dancing! Never! *(Fezziwig does a comic little jig. Mrs. Fezziwig laughs and applauds. Apprentice Scrooge, Dick Wilkins, BELLE, and the rest of the Quartet festoon the room with greenery under Mrs. Fezziwig's direction as the Quartet sings "Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly.")*

**QUARTET.** DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY  
FA-LA-LA-LA-LA, LA-LA-LA-LA  
'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY  
FA-LA-LA-LA-LA, LA-LA-LA-LA  
DON WE NOW OUR GAY APPAREL  
FA-LA-LA-LA-LA, LA-LA-LA-LA  
TROLL THE ANCIENT YULE TIDE CAROL  
FA-LA-LA-LA-LA, LA-LA-LA-LA

**FEZZIWIG.** *(Clapping his hands as they finish.)* Well done! *(Dancing music plays, and all form a semi-circle and clap for Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig, who dance together until winded.)*

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

**MRS. FEZZIWIG.** Merry Christmas, Mr. Fezziwig.

**FEZZIWIG.** Merry Christmas to you, Mrs. Fezziwig. And to you all! (*Cheering and clapping, all dance and make merry. Apprentice Scrooge and Belle, clearly a couple, dance, although Dick Wilkins also briefly dances with Belle. Apprentice Scrooge and Belle end up under the mistletoe, and Apprentice Scrooge steals a small kiss from Belle. Scrooge laughs and claps and dances, unseen by the party. When the merriment ends, Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig wish all a “Merry Christmas and good night, and the guests leave.”*)

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** A small matter, to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.

**SCROOGE.** Small!

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** Why, is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money; three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

**SCROOGE.** It isn't that. It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies on words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune. (*Scrooge is troubled.*)

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

**SCROOGE.** Nothing particular.

**GHOST OF 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.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** My time grows short. Quick! (*Apprentice Scrooge and Dick Wilkins appear.*)

**DICK WILKINS.** And he will not bend?

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** No. Father remains adamant. If I am wed, I am disinherited.

**DICK WILKINS.** What are his objections?

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** She had no dowry.

**DICK WILKINS.** Have you told Belle?

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** No. And I shall not. Nor shall you. Promise me, Dick.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

**DICK WILKINS.** I pledge my oath. What will you do?

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** I do not know. He has refused the charge for the ring. It will take every penny and then many months of wages for me to pay it on my own.

**DICK WILKINS.** If you go to Mr. Fezziwig-

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** Dick, I promise you this- I will never be beholden to any man for my support again. I will be utterly self-sufficient; no, more: I shall amass a fortune that dwarfs any inheritance my father could offer. *(Apprentice Scrooge fades away. Belle approaches Dick Wilkins.)*

**BELLE.** Where is Ebenezer?

**DICK WILKINS.** He is still at his ledger; he sends his regrets and asks that I escort you home in his stead.

**BELLE.** More and more evenings he spends at his books. I worry for him; he no longer seems happy.

**DICK WILKINS.** Ebenezer is securing your future. Be patient with him, Belle.

**BELLE.** You are his friend. Has he not seemed changed of late? Am I still as much in his affections as I was? Every day it grows more difficult to be certain. He no longer seeks my company?

**DICK WILKINS.** My company will have to suffice. May I escort you home? *(Dick Wilkins and Belle disappear. Apprentice Scrooge appears, counting out gold and weighing it on a small scale. Belle approaches him.)*

**BELLE.** Ebenezer.

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** You are early.

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

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** What idol has displaced you?

**BELLE.** A golden one.

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** *(Sarcastically.)* This is the even-handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

**BELLE.** You fear the world too much. All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you. Am I?

**BELLE.** Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** I was a boy.

**BELLE.** Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** Have I ever sought release?

**BELLE.** In words. No. Never.

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** In what, then?

**BELLE.** In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope at its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no.

**APPRENTICE SCROOGE.** You think not.

**BELLE.** I would gladly think otherwise if I could. Heaven know! But if you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl – you who weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

**SCROOGE.** *(To Apprentice Scrooge.)* Speak. Speak. Fool, why don't you speak!

**BELLE.** You may- the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen! *(Belle removes her little engagement ring and places it in the scale. The gold outweighs it. She disappears. Apprentice Scrooge pockets the ring and returns to counting and weighing gold.)*

**SCROOGE.** Spirit! Show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me? *(Apprentice Scrooge disappears.)*

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** One shadow more.

**SCROOGE.** No more! No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more! *(Belle reappears. Dick Wilkins affectionately surprises her from behind.)*

**DICK WILKINS.** Belle, I saw an old friend of ours this afternoon.

**BELLE.** Who was it?

**DICK WILKINS.** Guess.

**BELLE.** How can I? Tut, don't I know. Ebenezer.

**DICK WILKINS.** Ebenezer it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. He sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe. *(Belle smiles sadly and hugs Dick tightly.)*

**SCROOGE.** Spirit! Remove me from this place.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.** 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! *(Belle and Dick Wilkins disappear.)*

Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer! *(Scrooge's bedroom - chair, fireplace, grandfather clock, and four-poster bed - appears. Scrooge snatches up a blanket and covers the Ghost of Christmas Past, who vanishes. Scrooge dives into bed and pulls the bed-curtains closed. BLACKOUT.)*

### SCENE 6

*The grandfather clock strikes "One." The fireplace roars into life. The Quartet, heralds of the Ghost of Christmas Present, appears dressed in green singing "Good King Wenceslas." The Quartet festoons the bedroom in the trappings of Christmas. The bed is bathed in a blaze of light.*

**QUARTET.**      GOOD KING WINCESLAS LOOKED OUT  
                    ON THE FEAST OF STEPHEN  
                    WHEN THE SNOW LAY ROUND ABOUT  
                    DEEP AND CRIPS AND EVEN  
                    BRIGHTLY SHOWN THE MOON THAT NIGHT  
                    THOUGH THE FROST WAS CRUEL  
                    WHEN A POOR MAN CAME IN SIGHT

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

### GATH'RING WINTER FUEL

IN HIS MASTER'S STEPS HE TRODS  
WHERE THE SNOW LAY DINTED  
HEAT WAS IN THE VERY SOD  
WHICH THE SAINT HAD PRINTED  
THEREFORE, CHRISTIAN MEN, BE SURE  
WEALTH OR RANK POSSESSING  
YE WHO NOW WILL BLESS THE POOR  
SHALL YOURSELVES FIND BLESSING

### SCENE 7

*THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT ENTERS, barefoot, wearing a crown of holly, bearing a torch, and dressed in an open-chested green robe with white fur trim. His robe is belted with an empty scabbard. The Quartet bows to him and departs.*

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** Ebenezer Scrooge! (*Scrooge pushes aside the bed-curtains and peers out from the four-poster bed.*) Come out! Come out! Know me better, man! (*Scrooge scrambles out of the bed, avoiding eye contact.*) I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! (*Scrooge reluctantly drags his gaze to him.*) You have never seen the like of me before!

**SCROOGE.** Never.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers and sisters born in these later years?

**SCROOGE.** I don't think I have. I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers and sisters, Spirit?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** More than eighteen hundred.

**SCROOGE.** A tremendous family to provide for! Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I have learnt a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** Touch my robe! (*Scrooge's bedroom disappears, revealing the Victorian Street Scene. Edwin the Street Vendor and the Poulterer jostle one another and quarrel. The Ghost of Christmas Present sprinkles something over them which ends the quarrel, and drapes his arms about each of their shoulders.*)

**STREET VENDOR.** It is a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day.

**POULTERER.** So it is! God love it, so it is! Let me help you. (*The two pick up dropped items, smile at one another, and move on. A poor dining room appears. MRS. CRATCHIT, wearing a worn dress bedecked with many new ribbons, lays a tablecloth on a modest wooden table. BELINDA and PETER [she dressed in hand-me-downs from her mother, he dressed in hand-me-downs from his father, both of which are too big] sit at table with six mismatched chairs. Mrs. Cratchit places simple dishes of food on the table, which Belinda and Peter set. The Ghost of Christmas Present blesses them and sprinkles the dishes.*)

**SCROOGE.** Is there a peculiar flavor in what you sprinkle?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** There is. My own.

**SCROOGE.** Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** To any kindly given. To a poor one most.

**SCROOGE.** Why to a poor one most?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** Because it needs it most.

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

**BELINDA.** Here's Martha, mother!

**MRS. CRATCHIT.** Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!

**MARTHA.** We'd a deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, mother!

**MRS. CRATCHIT.** Well! Never mind so long as you are here. Sit down, my dear, Lord bless you.

**BELINDA.** There's father coming. Hide, Martha, hide! (*Martha hides under the table beneath the tablecloth. Bob Cratchit enters with TINY TIM on his shoulders. Tiny Tim has a leg brace and carries a crutch.*)

**BOB CRATCHIT.** Why, where's our Martha?

**MRS. CRATCHIT.** Not coming.

**BOB CRATCHIT.** Not coming! Not coming upon Christmas Day!

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

**MARTHA.** (*Bursting from beneath the table and hugging her father.*) Here I am, father! (*The Cratchits greet one another noisily.*)

**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 church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see. (*He pauses.*) I think Tiny Tim is growing stronger and heartier everyday, don't you? (*The Cratchits sit at table as Mrs. Cratchit places a small goose she has prepared. The Cratchits "ooh" and "ah."*)

**PETER.** Hurrah!

**BOB CRATCHIT.** I don't believe there ever was such a goose! A wonderful goose! It is the greatest success you've achieved since our marriage. The children excepted, of course.

**MRS. CRATCHIT.** It's a weight off my mind. I had my doubts, I tell you.

**BOB CRATCHIT.** Nonsense! It is the best Christmas goose we've ever had.

**BELINDA.** Wonderful, Mother.

**BOB CRATCHIT.** A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

**TINY TIM.** God bless us everyone! (*Bob Cratchit bows his head, as do all the Cratchits for a silent grace.*)

**SCROOGE.** Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

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

**SCROOGE.** No, no. Oh, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Man, if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh, God!

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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**BOB CRATCHIT.** (*Raising his glass, as do the other Cratchits.*) Mr. Scrooge! I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast. (*Every other Cratchit clanks their glass back on the table.*)

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

**BOB CRATCHIT.** My dear, the children! Christmas day.

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

**BOB CRATCHIT.** My dear, Christmas day.

**MRS. CRATCHIT.** I'll drink his health for your sake and for the Day's, not for his. Long life to him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt! (*Mrs. Cratchit and the children drink an unenthusiastic toast to Mr. Scrooge.*)

**BOB CRATCHIT.** Thank you, my dears. Peter, I've an eye on a situation for you which will bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly.

**BELINDA.** (*Teasing her brother.*) Peter will be a man of business like father!

**MARTHA.** (*To Mrs. Cratchit.*) I mean to lie abed tomorrow morning for a good long rest.

**MRS. CRATCHIT.** Tired out, dear?

**MARTHA.** A lord brought a countess in to the shop the other day and ordered oh so many hats, we haven't stopped. (*Teasing her brother.*) The lord was much about as tall as Peter.

**BOB CRATCHIT.** Tiny Tim, why don't you give us a song?

**PETER.** Yes, do!

**TINY TIM.**     AWAY IN A MANGER  
                  NO CRIB FOR A BED  
                  THE LITTLE LORD JESUS  
                  LAID DOWN HIS SWEET HEAD

                  THE STARS IN THE SKY  
                  LOOKED DOWN WHERE HE LAY  
                  THE LITTLE LORD JESUS

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

---

ASLEEP ON THE HAY

BE NEAR ME, LORD JESUS  
I ASK THEE TO STAY  
CLOSE BY ME FOREVER  
AND LOVE ME, I PRAY  
BLESS ALL THE DEAR CHILDREN  
IN THY TENDER CARE  
AND TAKE US TO HEAVEN  
TO LIVE WITH THEE THERE

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