A Christmas Carol

By
Barbara Field

From the book by
Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol was originally produced by The Guthrie Theater in 2009.
Characters (in order of appearance):

- Ebenezer Scrooge
- Bob Cratchit
- Fred
- Blakely
- Mr Forrest
- Tiny Tim
- Jacoby Marley
- Mrs. Grigsby
- Ghost of Christmas Past
- Young Ebenezer (boy)
- Fan
- Schoolmaster (Mr. Queeze)
- Fezziwig
- Dick Wilkins
- Young Ebenezer (young man)
- Belle Crawford
- Mrs. Fezziwig
- Susan the Cook
- Ghost of Christmas Present
- Peter Cratchit
- Tom Cratchit
- Mary Cratchit
- Mrs. Cratchit
- Belinda Cratchit
- Martha Cratchit
- Cecil
- Topper
- Mrs. Fred
- Dorothea
- Edwards
- Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come
- Grasper
- Snarkers
- Joe
- Mrs. Dilber
- Undertaker
- Nellie
- Maid

Ensemble: Narrators, Carolers, Pallbearers
From far away we come to you,
The snow in the street and the wind on the door,
To tell of great tidings strange and true.

Minstrels and maids stand forth on the floor;
From far away we come to you,
To tell of great tidings strange and true.

[THUNDER]

Marley was dead to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge’s signature was as good as gold —

For he was an excellent man of business.
Old Marley was as dead as a door nail.

[THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.]

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and Marley were partners for I don’t know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole inheritor, his soul friend and his soul mourner.

But even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, for on the very day of the funeral he went to the royal exchange and solemnized it with an undoubted bargain.

I see old Scratch has claimed his own at last. The fellow’s dead.

Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge.
A squeezing/
wrenching/
grasping/
scraping/
clutching/
covetous old sinner!
Secret/
self-contained/
and solitary as an oyster.
NARRATORS
Well there’s a thing. There is no doubt Marley was dead.

Dead as a door nail!

Just so. You must distinctly understand this or nothing wonderful can come of the story we are going to relate.

ALL (SUNG)
[WE ARE SHIFTING INTO THE OFFICE.]
Cold is the morning and bleak is the day;
Warm are our hearts as the sunshine of May!

NARRATORS
Scrooge had never painted out old Marley's name.

[SIGN APPEARS.]
There it stands seven years later: Scrooge and Marley.
Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge, Scrooge, and sometimes Marley.
But he answered to both. It was all the same to him.

ALL (HUMMING)
Sing, little children, sing in your gladness,
Let Christmas pleasures banish your sadness,
Love, joy and peace to you.

NARRATOR (OVER HUMMING)
For what did he care? To edge his way along the crowded paths of life warning all humankind to keep its distance was the very thing he liked!

[SCROOGE RINGS BELL; BOB REACTS, ETC.]

NARRATOR
Once upon a time — of all good days in the year, on Christmas Eve — old Scrooge was busy in his counting house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather — foggy withal; but Scrooge carried his own low temperature always about with him.

NARRATOR
No warmth could warm him, no wintry weather chill him.

[BELL STRIKES THREE.]

NARRATOR
Three o’clock, but it was quite dark already. It had not been light all day.
[**SCROOGE** IS AT HIS DESK. **CRATCHIT** IS AT HIS OWN COUNTER, SCRIBBLING AWAY. HIS FINGERS ARE NEARLY FROZEN. HE TRIES TO WARM THEM AT A CANDLE. FUTILE. **CRATCHIT** SNEEZES, **SCROOGE** GLARES.]

**NARRATOR**
As the fire was very small — one coal — and as Scrooge kept the coal box — his clerk, Bob Cratchit, could not replenish the heat.

[**SCROOGE** KICKS THE LID CLOSED.]

**NARRATOR**
Wherefore the clerk tried to warm himself at his candle, but not being a man of strong imagination, he failed.

[**FRED** ENTERS.]

**FRED**
A merry Christmas, Uncle. God save you!

**SCROOGE**
[PAYS NO ATTENTION.]
Bah! Humbug!

**FRED**
Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don’t mean that, I’m sure.

**SCROOGE**
I do. I do! Look at you — what right have you to be merry? You’re poor enough.

**FRED**
What right have you to be dismal? You’re rich enough.

**SCROOGE**
Bah! Humbug.

**FRED**
Don’t be cross, Uncle.

**SCROOGE**
What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas? Out upon ‘Merry Christmas!’ What’s Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer?

**FRED**
Yes, but —

**SCROOGE**
If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with a ‘Merry Christmas’ on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly in his heart —
FRED

Uncle!

SCROOGE

Nephew! You 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. How has it ever profited you?

FRED

There are many things from which I have not profited, Uncle, Christmas among the rest. But I’ve always thought it a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. The only time in the long calendar of the year, in fact, when men and women open their shut-up hearts freely. And so, 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.]

SCROOGE

[TO BOB:]
Let me hear another sound from you, Cratchit, and you’ll keep your Christmas looking for a new situation.

[TO FRED:]
There’s another lunatic — 15 shillings a week and five mouths to feed.

CRATCHIT

Six.

SCROOGE

You’re such a powerful speaker, Nephew, I wonder you don’t go into Parliament.

FRED

Come to dinner tomorrow, Uncle.

SCROOGE

I’ll see you in Hell first!

FRED

But why? Why? You have yet to meet my wife.

SCROOGE

Why did you ever get married?

FRED

Because I fell in love.
SCROOGE
Because you fell in love?! The only one thing in the world more ridiculous than Merry Christmas is falling in love.

FRED
Nay, Uncle. You never came to see me before I married, 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
Ha!

FRED
Why are we enemies? We’re family.

SCROOGE
[DISMISS FRED WITH BELL.]
Good afternoon —
[TO BOB:]
Sit down!

FRED
I’m sorry with all my heart to find you so resolute against me. But I came here in homage to Christmas, and I will keep my Christmas humor to the last. And so ... a merry Christmas, Uncle —

SCROOGE
Good afternoon.

FRED
And a happy New Year — !

[SCROOGE HURLS HIS PAPERWEIGHT AT FRED, WHO CATCHES IT.]

SCROOGE
Good afternoon!

FRED
Why, thank you, Uncle, I shall treasure this fine paperweight.

[SCROOGE COMES AFTER FRED — FRED CROSSES TO DOOR, SHOUTING OUT FOLLOWING.]

Greetings of the season, Bob.

CRATCHIT
And the same to you.

FRED
And to your good wife and your family.

CRATCHIT
Thank you, Mr. Fred.
Two visitors for you, sir.

SCROOGE

Of course for me. You don’t receive visitors.

BLAKELY

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

SCROOGE

Addressing Mr. Marley would be no pleasure. He’s been dead for seven years. Seven years ago, this very night.

BLAKELY

Sir, we have no doubt his generosity has survived in his partner.

SCROOGE

Oh? Why?

[SCROOGE RESUMES SCRIBBLING AWAY AT WORK.]

FORREST

Mr. Scrooge, Mr. Marley: at this festive time of year it is with urgency that we provide for the poor and destitute. Many thousands are in want of the basic necessities. Hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir —

SCROOGE

Are there no prisons?

BLAKELY

Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE

And the work houses? They still exist?

BLAKELY

I wish I could say they did not.

SCROOGE

And the Treadmill? The Poorhouse? They’re still in full vigor?

FORREST

Both very busy, sir.

SCROOGE

Thank heavens — I was afraid from what you said at first that they had been stopped in their most useful course. I am very glad to hear it.
FORREST
We are raising a fund to buy the poor some food and means of warmth, Mr. Marley —

BLAKELY
Mr. Scrooge.

FORREST
Just so!

BLAKELY
Forrest! Mr. Scrooge! At this time of year, want is felt keenly, and abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE
Nothing.

BLAKELY
Ah, you wish to remain anonymous?

SCROOGE
I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, that is my answer. I don’t make myself merry at Christmas and I cannot afford the luxury of making idle people merry. I am taxed — outrageously taxed — to support those fine old institutions: the workhouse, prison, and poorhouse — those that are badly off must go there.

BLAKELY
Many can’t go there, sir, and many would rather die than go there —

SCROOGE
If they had rather die, they had better do so, and decrease the surplus population.

[CANdle GOES OUT AND WE HEAR “EBENEZER SCROOGE.”
SCROOGE FEELS A PRESENCE IN THE ROOM NONE OTHERS SENSE.]

Who calls my name?

BLAKELY
Sir?

SCROOGE
Eh?

BLAKELY
Many people can’t…

SCROOGE
[RECOVERS.]
Besides, I don’t know what you say to be true.

FORREST
But you should know it, sir.

SCROOGE
It’s none of my business, and as mine occupies me profitably enough ... good afternoon.
BLAKELY

Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Good afternoon. Vultures.

[BLAKELY PULLS FORREST OUT THE DOOR. SCROOGE AND CRATCHIT RESUME WORK.]

NARRATORS

The fog and darkness thickened.

[DURING ABOVE QUARTERS CHIME AND WE SEE A BOY COMING INTO THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTING HOUSE.]

CAROLER

*God rest ye, merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.*

*For Jesus Christ, our savior, was born upon this day.*

SCROOGE

[CHASING BOY WITH RULER.]

Get out! Get out!

[BOY RUNS. BELL FROM ABOVE CHIMES SIX OVER FOLLOWING:]

[BOB PUTS AWAY WORK, HAT AND COMFORTER ON, AND HEADING FOR THE DOOR AS SCROOGE GETS COAT.]

SCROOGE

You’ll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT

If quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE

It’s *not* convenient — and it’s not fair. If I was to deduct half a crown for your holiday, you’d think yourself ill used, I’ll be bound!

CRATCHIT

Yes, sir.

SCROOGE

But you don’t think me ill used when I pay a day’s wages for no work.

CRATCHIT

It’s only once a year, sir.

SCROOGE

A poor excuse for picking my pockets every December 25th. I am a victim — a victim of humbug! Oh, take your Christmas, Cratchit, but be here all the earlier next morning.
CRATCHIT
I shall, sir. Thank you, Mr. Scrooge, and a merry — Good evening.
[CRATCHIT WRAPS HIS MUFFLER ROUND HIS NECK AND RACES OUT OF THE OFFICE LIKE A BOY RELEASED FROM SCHOOL.]

TINY TIM
Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge.

[STREET ACTIVITY. MUSIC AND SONG.]

Masters in this Hall, Hear ye news today
Brought from over sea, And ever I you pray:
Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell sing we clear!
Holpen are all folk on earth, Born is God’s son so dear.

NARRATOR
Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and went home to bed.

NARRATOR
The fog and frost so hung about the house that it seemed the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, had to grope his way.

NARRATOR
Now it was a fact that there was nothing particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large.

NARRATOR
It was also a fact that Scrooge had seen it night and day during his whole residence in that place.

NARRATOR
And then let any man explain, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge saw in the knocker not a knocker, but —

MARLEY’S VOICE
Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE
Jacob Marley! No, it can’t be you, you’re dead.

NARRATOR
As Scrooge stared at it ... it was a knocker once more.

NARRATOR
He half expected to see Marley’s pigtail on the other side of the door

SCROOGE
Pooh, pooh.
NARRATOR
He lived in a gloomy set of chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner, Jacob Marley. No one lived there now but Scrooge.

[TAKING OFF HIS COAT AND SHOES.]

NARRATOR
It was dark, but Scrooge cared not a button for that.

SCROOGE
I like the dark. Darkness is cheap, and cheapness is tonic for the sensible man.

NARRATOR
Nor for the cold.

SCROOGE
I like the cold. It nips the bones and keeps the blood from overheating.

[WE HEAR A CREAK.]

NARRATOR
Nor the loneliness.

SCROOGE
I like solitude. No one can make demands on me, no one can do me injury, there’s nothing I need share. I deem solitude to be a state of bliss!

MARLEY’S VOICE
Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE
Who calls my name? Grigsby!

MRS. GRIGSBY
Sir?

NARRATOR
Thus secured against surprise, he put on his dressing gown and sat and read lovingly from his favorite volume – his banking book.

[MRS. GRIGSBY ENTERS, BRINGING A BOWL OF GRUEL SCROOGE SITS IN HIS CHAIR.]

NARRATOR
As he sat before the fire, a disused bell, that hung in the room began to …

[AN OLD BELL BEGINS TO RING. HE GETS UP TO LOOK AT IT. IT STOPS RINGING. HE SITS DOWN. THE BELL STARTS TO RING AGAIN]

SCROOGE
Is a man not to have a decent night’s sleep?!
[A CACOPHONY OF BELLS.]

[SUDDENLY THERE COMES A HORRIBLE CLANKING AND RATTLING OF CHAINS.]

SCROOGE
How now, what do you want with me?

MARLEY
Much.

SCROOGE
Who are you?

MARLEY
Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE
You’re very particular for a ghost. Well, who were you?

MARLEY
In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE
Jacob! You don’t look at all well. Can you — Can you sit down?

MARLEY
I can.

SCROOGE
Do it then.

MARLEY
You don’t believe in me.

SCROOGE
No, I don’t.

MARLEY
What evidence would you have of my reality besides your senses?

SCROOGE
I don’t know.

MARLEY
I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. Then why do you doubt your senses?
SCROOGE
Because little things affect them. You might be the result of my dinner — an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, an undercooked potato.

SCROOGE
— there’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!

SCROOGE
Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

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

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 his spirit must walk 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. Doomed to wander through the world and witness what it might have changed to happiness.

SCROOGE
But you’re chained and fettered, Jacob? Tell me why?

MARLEY
I wear the chain I forged in life … Is its pattern strange to you? You have your own chain, Ebenezer, and yours is as heavy as mine was seven Christmas Eves ago …

MARLEY
I cannot tell you all I would. A very little time is permitted to me.

SCROOGE
Please, please — Jacob — Jacob Marley, speak comfort to me.

MARLEY
I have none to give.

MARLEY
Nor have I time. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. Mark me — in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money changing hole. Now I have roamed for seven years and weary journeys lie before me.

SCROOGE
Seven years dead, and traveling the whole time?

MARLEY
On the wings of the wind — no rest, no peace.
SCROOGE
Then your debt should have been paid up by now.

MARLEY
Oh blind man! Blind man! No amount of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunity misused. Yet such was I, 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, benevolence were all my business. The dealings of our trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of our business. Heed me, for my time is nearly gone.

SCROOGE
I will, but don’t be so hard on me, Jacob.

VOICE CALLING
Jacob Marley.

MARLEY
I come tonight to warn you. You have a final chance and hope of escaping my fate ... it is a chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE
You were always a good friend to me, Jacob. Thank’ee.

MARLEY
You will be haunted by three Spirits.

[SCROOGE’S COUNTENANCE FALLS.]

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

MARLEY
It is.

SCROOGE
I ... think I’d rather not.

MARLEY
Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one. The second on the next night at the same hour.

SCROOGE
Couldn’t I take ’em all at once and have it over with?
MARLEY
No, the third on the third night, when the last stroke of twelve has ceased to vibrate. Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread.

[FRENCH TRAP OPENS — SMOKE AND LIGHT AND SOUNDS OF LAMENTATIONS. MARLEY GESTURES SCROOGE TO APPROACH TRAP AND STOPS HIM AT SOME POINT.]

MARLEY
Heed the visits of these three Spirits, Ebenezer, remember what has passed between us and look to see me no more.

[MARLEY DISAPPEARS DOWN THE TRAP. SCROOGE TURNS BACK INTO THE ROOM, CHECKS IT OUT]

SCROOGE

[HE CLIMBS INTO BED AND CLOSES THE BED CURTAINS.]

NARRATOR
Being much in need of repose, Scrooge went straight to bed and fell asleep upon the instant.

BOY
[HUMS]
Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel ...

END STAVE ONE.
STAVE TWO: THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS

[THE STAGE IS DARK. SLOWLY SCROOGE’S BED COMES INTO RELIEF, AND THE BELLS OF A NEARBY CHURCH BEGIN TO CHIME. SCROOGE PEEKS THROUGH HIS BED CURTAINS.]

SCROOGE
Ten ... eleven ... twelve — but it was past two when I went to bed — Is it possible I’ve slept through a whole day-and-a-half. Is it possible that it’s now twelve noon and something’s happened to the sun?! Was it a dream? Or not? “Expect the first ghost when the bell tolls one.”

[THE CHURCH BELL CHIMES THE FIRST QUARTER.]
A quarter past twelve.
[THE BELL CHIMES THE HALF-HOUR.]
Half past the hour.
[THE BELL CHIMES THE THIRD QUARTER.]
Quarter to it.
[THE BELL CHIMES THE HOUR, THEN STRIKES ONE.]
The hour itself —
[TRIUMPHANT:]
And nothing! Ha, I knew it!
[PAST UP TRAP.]

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

PAST
I am.

SCROOGE
Who and what are you?

PAST
I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE
Long past?

PAST
No, your past. I am your memory, your transport, your history — come, walk with me.

SCROOGE
What business brings you here?

PAST
Business? Your welfare.
[BED AND ROOM GO AWAY. LIGHTS CHANGE. MIST.]
SCROOGE
A good night’s sleep might have been more beneficial to my welfare.

PAST
Your reclamation then.

SCROOGE
This reclamation, how much will it cost me?

PAST
Take heed!

[PAST CLASPS HIM BY THE ARM.]

SCROOGE
But the weather’s not fit for walking. I have a head cold. I’m freezing.

PAST
Shut me out at your peril! I have come about the business of your reclamation.

SCROOGE
But, Spirit, I’m mortal and liable to fall.

PAST
No, you shall be upheld. Bear but a touch of my hand there, on your heart.

[PAST LEADS SCROOGE FORWARD.]

THE COUNTRY. A BURST OF SILENT ACTION. MANY PEOPLE CROSS THROUGH — STUDENTS WITH THEIR PARENTS — CALLING OUT TO EACH OTHER “HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS” ETC.

SCROOGE
Good heavens, I know this place.

PAST
The things you will see are shadows of things that have been — they will have no consciousness of us.

NARRATION
He was conscious of a 1,000 odors floating in the air — each one connected with a 1,000 thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long forgotten.

SCROOGE
Look, it’s my old school ... I was a boy here.

PAST
But the school is not quite deserted. A solitary, friendless boy is left there still.

SCROOGE
I know.

[HE SOBS.]
And look, my books, my dear, dear books. My Robinson Crusoe — such adventures we had together. So many exotic voyages. And Cinderella. Such magic.
Your lip is trembling ... and what’s that on your cheek?

**SCROOGE**

It is snow ... snow.

**[HE READS OVER THE BOY’S SHOULDER:]**

Ah, “The Arabian Nights” ...

**YOUNG EBENEZER**

Look, it’s Ali Baba!

**SCROOGE**

Dear old Ali Baba —

**YOUNG EBENEZER**

Are you prepared to rescue the princess?

**SCROOGE AND YOUNG EBENEZER**

The sultan has her locked in the tower.

**[FAN ENTERS.]**

**FAN**

Ebenezer!

**SCROOGE**

The princess.

**FAN**

Ebenezer.

**YOUNG EBENEZER**

Fan! Is it really you?

**SCROOGE**

Look, Spirit, it’s my sister, Fan!

**[SCROOGE COMES CLOSE TO HER, STUDIES HER.]**

Fan! Isn’t it odd? You’re so young and I’m so old —

**FAN**

Ebenezer! I have come to bring you home, dear brother. Home!

**EBENEZER**

Truly, Fan?

**FAN**

Yes. Home for good and all. Home forever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, and when I asked him if you might come home, he said yes.
EBENEZER
He said yes?

FAN
He did. We’ll be together all Christmas long. And look, Ebenezer, I’ve brought you a present.

EBENEZER
A present? What is it?
[SHE HANDS HIM A BOX, INSIDE IS A ROUND GLOBE.]
What’s this?

FAN AND SCROOGE
A paperweight.

FAN
You put it on top of papers, to keep them from blowing away.

EBENEZER
It’s beautiful. Thank you, Fan.

FAN
You’re welcome. And look what Father gave me?
[SHE OPENS A MUSIC BOX, WHICH PLAYS THE HOLLY & THE IVY.]

PAST
Your sister Fan. She was a delicate creature, was she not? And possessed of a generous heart.

SCROOGE
So she was, Spirit.

PAST
She died a young woman, and had, as I recall, children?

SCROOGE
One child.

PAST
Your nephew Fred.

SCROOGE
Yes. Fred. Yes.

SCHOOLMASTER
Bring down Master Scrooge’s trunk. So ... I hear you’re leaving us?

EBENEZER
Yes, Mr. Queeze.
SCHOOLMASTER
On to better things?

EBENEZER
Yes, sir. I’m going home.

SCHOOLMASTER
Home? Your father writes me that he has found you a situation.

EBENEZER & FAN
What’s a situation?

SCHOOLMASTER
A job! Work! In a bloody Boot Blacking Factory.

EBENEZER
But I want to go home.

SCHOOLMASTER
Home? You’re going to London.

EBENEZER

FAN
[SHE IS FADING:]
Ebenezer ... dear brother.

[FAN AND EB ARE EACH LIFTED UP ON CHAIRS (COACHES) AND TRAVEL DIFFERENT WAYS AS CAST CREATES THE BUSTLE AND NOISE OF LONDON STREET VENDORS, ETC.]

NARRATORS
The boot blacking warehouse was by the Thames. Gloomy/Rat infested/ 12 years old/ 10 hour days/ 6 shillings a week. Ebenezer’s childhood died in that dismal place.

SCROOGE
But I learned.

PAST
You learned, yes. You learned to save your shillings and pence.

SCROOGE
I learned to be self-sufficient. The dark stain of poverty never stuck to me — let us go, Spirit, I have seen enough.

PAST
Enough. You don’t know the meaning of ‘enough’.

NARRATION [PAST]
And at once Scrooge and the Spirit found themselves in a busy thoroughfare of a city dressed for Christmas.

[WASSAILERS SING — MUCH STREET NOISE INCLUDING BELLE AND GIRLS IN SLEIGH AND OVER THIS: EBENEZER WITH FOOD BASKET FEZZIWIG SIGN UP]
NARRATION
The stars were particularly bright in the sky that night, and the laughter, unable to keep within the confines of the houses, crept beneath the door jambs and echoed in the streets. And about everything there hung an air of expectation.

PAST
Do you know this place?

SCROOGE
Know it? Was I not apprenticed here?

[FEZZI ENTERS AT DESK RINGING HIS BELL AND SAYS.]

FEZZIWIG
Hilli-ho, hilli-ho.

SCROOGE
Why it’s old Fezziwig, bless his heart!

[LOOKS AT WATCH]
FEZZIWIG
Bless my soul! Hilli ho, Dick, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE
Old Fezziwig alive again — the finest master a lad could have.

[WILKINS ENTERS.]

FEZZIWIG
Ho there, Dick!

SCROOGE
Look, Dick Wilkins —
He was very much attached to me, was Dick Wilkins.

FEZZIWIG
Ebenezer!

EBENEZER
Here I am, sir. Merry Christmas, Dick.

SCROOGE
Good lord! It’s me!

FEZZIWIG
Ho, my boys, no more work tonight. It’s Christmas Eve, lads. Let’s have the shutters up and do it before a man can say —
FEZZIWIG AND BOYS

Jack Robinson!!
[THEY RUN OFF]

FEZZIWIG

Hillo – ho! Christmas Eve. Clean up the warehouse and do it before a man can say —

ALL

Jack Robinson!!

NARRATION

[AS OTHERS ENTER:]
The floors were swept and watered.
The lamps were trimmed.
And fuel was heaped upon the fire.
In came the fiddler,
With his fiddle, which he tuned like fifty stomach aches.
In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one glorious, substantial smile.
In came the two Misses Fezziwig, beaming and loveable.

FEZZIWIG

And …Music Sam!

FEZZIWIG, MRS. FEZZIWIG, PETUNIA & MARIGOLD

In came what seemed like all of London.

[MUSIC. THE GUESTS ENTER, MINGLE/DANCE]

FEZZI GUESTS (SING)

“DANCE TO THE TUNE NOW WE, DANCE TO THE TUNE NOW WE, DANCE TO THE TUNE NOW WE, ALL ON A CHRISTMAS EVE. —REPEAT—
EAT AND DRINK WE SHALL MERRY BE, EAT AND DRINK WE SHALL MERRY BE, EAT AND DRINK WE SHALL MERRY BE, ALL ON A CHRISTMAS EVE.
A WASSAIL, A WASSAIL THROUGHOUT ALL THIS TOWN!
OUR CUP IT IS WHITE AND OUR ALE IT IS BROWN;
OUR WASSAIL IS MADE OF GOOD ALE AND TRUE,
SOME NUTMEG AND GINGER, THE BEST WE COULD BREW
FOL THE DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDYDEE, FOL DAIROL LOL THE DADDY,
SING TOO—RAL AYE DO!
THERE’S MASTER AND MISTRESS SIT DOWN BY THE FIRE.
WHILE WE POOR WASSAILERS DO WAIT IN THE MIRE;
SO YOU, PRETTY MAID, WITH YOUR SILVER HEAD PIN,
PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR AND LET US COME IN
FOL THE DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDYDEE, FOL DAIROL LOL THE DADDY,
SING TOO—RAL AYE DO! —REPEAT—
FOL THE DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DEE, FOL THE DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DOL, FOL THE DOLDY DEE DEE”

FEZZIWIG

[AS DANCE ENDS IN A MESS.]

Well done!

[AND DANCERS GO INTO A SLOW WALTZ TABLEAU AS EBENEZER COMES ‘OUTSIDE’ WITH TEA. BELLE FOLLOWS.]

SCROOGE

Belle, it’s Belle.

BELLE

Merry Christmas.

EBENEZER

[STARTLED —SPIFFS AND STANDS AWKWARDLY.]

I beg your pardon?
BELLE
I said ‘Merry Christmas’.

EBENEZER
Indeed.

SCROOGE
Très Belle.

BELLE
Your sleeve is wet … here let me wipe it off.

EBENEZER
No. No, it’s perfectly dry.

BELLE
Sorry.

EBENEZER
Sorry. I just came out here to …

BELLE
What?

EBENEZER
It’s not important …

BELLE
Are you hiding, young man?

PETUNIA & MARIGOLD (OFFSTAGE)
Ebenezer!

EBENEZER
Well, I … Yes.

BELLE
Dear! Oh Dear! No wonder you’re hiding. Don’t you love Christmas?

EBENEZER

BELLE
Are you hungry?

EBENEZER
Starving, but I’d be sure to do something stupid … spill my tea …

BELLE
Butter your cravat… My name is Belle. Belle Crawford.

EBENEZER
And I’m Scrooge — Ebenezer Scrooge.
BELLE
Come. You’re staring — is something wrong … my dress?

EBENEZER
You look like a princess in a fairy tale — you’re …

BELLE & SCROOGE
Cinderella?

EBENEZER
Exactly … [THEY LAUGH.]
And at midnight does your gown turn to rags?

BELLE
Nearly. Before midnight I must get home to my three young girls.

EBENEZER
[CRESTFALLEN.]
Ah. … Well I’m sure you have a handsome family, madam.

BELLE
Oh? Oh! My dear Mr. Scrooge you are quite mistaken. The girls are my charges; I am their governess.

EBENEZER
You work for a family?

BELLE
The Hogarths, yes.

EBENEZER
I’m so glad!! Well not that you must work, but I mean Heavens!

[MR. AND MRS. FEZZIWIG COME UP TO THEM.]

FEZZIWIG
Ah! Ebenezer. I see you have met our Miss Crawford.

EBENEZER
Miss Crawford — Indeed.

MRS. FEZZIWIG
Belle is my third cousin once removed.

FEZZIWIG
[TO MRS. FEZZIWIG]
He seems dazzled, positively dazzled!
MRS. FEZZIWIG
Belle, you appear to have hypnotized the young man.

[MUSIC STARTS.]

BELLE & EBENEZER
[TAKING EBENEZER’S HAND]
Music Sam!.

NARRATION (MR. AND MRS. FEZZIWIG)
And Ebenezer danced every dance with Belle.
Without treading on her toes.
And by the next Christmas party, they were both in love.

[EBENEZER AND BELLE KISS. FRIENDS RUN ON TO CHEER AND CONGRATULATE THEM AND THEN THEY SING AND LEAD US INTO:]

FEZZIWIG
Ah, my friends. Merry Christmas, my friends. Tonight we’ll do it! We’ll make merry and dance away the night. We’ll have a thorough celebration!
[FIDDLER FLOURISH. ALL CHEER.]

MRS. F.
Mr. F has such a way with words.

FEZZIWIG
My wife, my beautiful, bountiful wife — yes, I mean you, Mrs. F. Now don’t be modest, you’re as handsome as the day I met you.

MRS F
Get on with you!

FEZZIWIG
And our daughters, Petunia and Marigold. You all know our little flowers: Petunia she came first. And Marigold, our second.

MRS. F
Don’t they look a treat, Mr. F?

FEZZIWIG
Blooming, positively blooming.
FEZZIWIG
But none can compare with their dear old mum.

MRS. F
He’s such a rake!

FEZZIWIG
And now friends, for the feast! And such a feast it will be!

TABLE COMES UP TRAP.
Savory meat pies and a blazing crown of good English beef. And pickles, of course. And sweets and puddings! Hot mulled wines and plenty of beer! And Mrs. F’s rich mince pies — magnificent!

And, of course, the goose!

SUSAN THE COOK BRINGS OUT GOOSE AND DO THE GOOSE BIT.

ALL EXIT AFTER THE GOOSE. A WALTZ BEGINS.

SCROOGE
Such a splendid party, Spirit.

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

SCROOGE
Small?

PAST
Why! He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money, three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserve such praise?

FEZZIWIG HAS COME BACK OUT AND GIVES ENVELOPES TO EBENEZER AND DICK.

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. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

PAST
What’s the matter?

SCROOGE
Nothing in particular.

PAST
Something, I think?
SCROOGE
No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to Bob Cratchit just now! That’s all.

EBENEZER
… And when we’re married, we’ll be so rich —

BELLE
So happy — with 10 children —

EBENEZER
So very rich. You’ll have a new gown for every day of the week.

BELLE
No need.

EBENEZER
Oh, Belle. Don’t you love Christmas?

[THEY KISS]

SCROOGE
Love!

PAST
Love, indeed. Romance, hope — a healthy percentage of mortals’ time is spent on love. You’re a man who respects figures — why do you suppose they do it?

SCROOGE
Because they’re fools. Love’s a humbug! It’s a useless commodity, love. It produces nothing but excess children. And excess pain.

PAST
Pain? Indeed.

[JACOB ENTERS WITH PAPERS. SEES BELLE & EBENEZER]

JACOB
Ebenezer!

SCROOGE AND EBENEZER
Jacob!

JACOB
Mr. Scrooge.

EBENEZER
Mr. Marley. You remember my fiancé. Miss …

JACOB
Miss Crawford, of course. Greetings of the season, Miss Crawford.
BELLE

And to you, Mr. Marley.

EBENEZER

Did you obtain the mortgages?

JACOB

At a price you’ll like.

EBENEZER

All three buildings?

JACOB

As of this evening all three buildings are ours.

EBENEZER

Wonderful.

BEGIN TO EXIT.

JACOB

The present tenants will have to leave tonight …

BELLE

On Christmas Eve?

EBENEZER

We needn’t evict them on Christmas Eve?

JACOB

Of course not. Tomorrow morning then.

EBENEZER

Come Belle!

SHE FOLLOWS.

PAST

My time grows short! Quick!

WE SHIFT TO OFFICE, SCROOGE’S DESK — EBENEZER IS DRESSED AND CHANGED ON STAGE BY NARRATORS.

NARRATORS

Again Scrooge saw himself
Older now — a man in the prime of life
Scrooge and Marley prospered.
While Fezziwig declined.
Ebenezer’s face began to wear the signs of care and avarice.
For the passion had taken root.
[BELLE ENTERS.]

SCROOGE
Spirit, show me no more. I remember, I cannot bear to watch.

PAST
It happened, do not blame me.

BELLE
It matters little — to you very little. Another love has displaced me in your heart.

EBENEZER
Never! Who? What love has displaced you?

BELLE
A golden one.

EBENEZER
Nonsense!

BELLE
Money.

SCROOGE
Listen to the girl!

EBENEZER
How hypocritical, Belle! There’s nothing so cruel in the world as poverty, and yet the world says it condemns nothing as much as the pursuit of wealth.

BELLE
That pursuit is the only passion you permit yourself. It blinds you. I think you see nothing of the cruelty of poverty.

EBENEZER
Humbug!

BELLE
Listen to me! Ebenezer, you fear the world too much. You wish to be beyond its reach.

EBENEZER
I’ve grown wiser. What then? I’m not changed toward you. Am I? Am I?

BELLE
Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and contented to be so. It was made when you were a different man.
EBENEZER
I was a boy!

BELL
Ebenezer, I will release you from your vow.

EBENEZER
I’ve never sought release.

BELLE
In words, no.

EBENEZER
In what, then?

BELLE
In a changed nature, an altered spirit, in everything that made my love of any value in your sight. Tell me, if you were free today, would you choose a girl without a dowry?

SCROOGE
Yes! Yes! Tell her you would!

EBENEZER
You think not?

SCROOGE
You fool!

BELLE
I would gladly think otherwise, if I could.
[SHE HANDS HIM RING.]

BELLE
I release you with a full heart, for the love of a man you once were. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

[BELLE EXITS.]

SCROOGE
[TO EBENEZER:]
Don’t let her go! Go after her!
[OFFICE DISAPPEARS. BED ON. SNOW.]

EBENEZER
Humbug! Love is a humbug! It’s all humbug!
[HE LEAVES.]
SCROOGE

[TRYING TO CATCH PAST.]
Spirit, remove me from this place! Remove me, I cannot bear it!

PAST

[TURNING AND GOING DOWN TRAP.]
I told you these were but shadows.

SCROOGE

Haunt me no longer. Leave me, take me home.

[BIG BELL SOUNDS ONE.]

SCROOGE

Snow! I’m alone in the snow.
But it’s soft, and warm, and Bright!

END STAVE TWO.