

# A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

## Act I

### III

Time: Christmas Eve. Setting: Scrooge's office.  
As curtains open, Narrator is seated on a high stool. Scrooge, wearing drab clothes, is at a big desk and Cratchit is stooped over a little desk, writing frantically. Next to ~~the~~ Cratchit's desk is a bowl of coals.

NARRATOR: Once upon a time there was a very mean old man named Ebenezer Scrooge. (Scrooge gets up from his desk and folds his arms in anger and growls, scowls, clears throat grumpily.)

SCROOGE: X Bah, humbug! ]

NARRATOR: Old Scrooge had a poor man named Bob Cratchit working for him. Cratchit was so poor that he could not even buy himself a jacket.

(Cratchit rubs his hands to keep warm.)

SCROOGE: X Cratchit! Get back to work ]

CRATCHIT: (shivering): Y-Y-Yes sir.

NARRATOR: Tonight will be Christmas Eve. Here comes Scrooge's nephew now to wish his uncle a Merry Christmas.

(Fred enters)

FRED: (happily) Merry Christmas, Uncle Scrooge!

SCROOGE (angrily): X Just who do you think you are barging in on me like this during working hours? ]

Fred

2/FRED: Oh come now, Uncle, it's Christmas Eve.

SCROOGE: ~~x~~ Bah, humbug! You and your Christmas are a big waste<sup>w</sup> of time. Now leave me alone! Can't you see I'm busy?

FRED: All right! I'm leaving! I just came by to invite you ~~to~~ for Christmas dinner tomorrow.

SCROOGE: ~~x~~ Well, I'm NOT coming. I'll work while you and your family waste your lives. What good did Christmas ever do you, anyhow?

(Fred turns to the audience, shrugs his shoulders, and with a "what ~~can~~ I do" look, leaves)

CRATCHIT: S-S-Sir?

SCROOGE: ~~x~~ What<sup>do</sup> you want (Pause) Hurry up — I'm busy.

CRATCHIT: Well sir, I was wondering if (pause) I could have the day off tomorrow?

SCROOGE: ~~x~~ (to audience, sarcastically and bitterly) Humph! A whole day off, just because it's Christmas day. Next thing you know he'll want a week's vacation and a raise! (To Cratchit) Well I don't like it at all — it's not fair — you just better be here extra early the next day.

CRATCHIT: Yes sir. Thank you sir. (He goes back to work for a minute — then stops)  
Um, Mr. Scrooge, sir —

3/ SCROOGE: ~~It~~ again! ~~is it~~ now?

CRATCHIT: It's time to close, sir.

SCROOGE: ~~It~~ can't be. (He takes out his watch from pocket, looks at it, and returns it to his pocket.) Oh, seven o'clock. Well, for once, you're right!

CRATCHIT: G-G-Good night sir. I wish you a merry Chr —

SCROOGE: ~~(interrupting)~~ Don't say it! I don't even want to hear that horrible word again. Christmas is humbug, all humbug!

CURTAIN II

ACT II - Scrooge's apartment

As curtain opens, there is a bed - made of two desks - with pillow and blanket also a chair and coalboard fireplace. Above the fireplace a square is cut out where Marley's face will appear.

Sound: Voices offstage slowly and softly hum "God Rest You Merry Gentlemen"

NARRATOR: Scrooge goes home to his lonely apartment and eats dinner.

(Scrooge sits in front of fire. He is eating. He wears a long nightgown and a long tasseled nightcap.)

NARRATOR: He is thinking about his old partner Marley who has been dead for seven years. Suddenly he hears a strange noise.

(Sound: Clinking chains. Marley's head appears above the fireplace. Around his neck are chains & keys.)

Music fades out

4 SCROOGE: (very surprised): Why it's Marley! I must be seeing things! You've been dead for seven years!]

MARLEY (ghostly tone): Yes, I know. But all the same my spirit has come to haunt you. You are a very bad man, Ebenezer. And so was I. But you will have a chance to change so you will not suffer as I do.

SCROOGE (gruffly): Well I don't want to change. I'm quite all right the way I am.]

MARLEY: We shall see. Three spirits shall visit you tonight - the Spirit of Christmas Past, the Spirit of Christmas Present, and the Spirit of Christmas Yet-to-come. Just remember - without their visits you shall have no chance to be happy - ever! And you shall wind up like me - a ghost chain! Take note, Scrooge!

(Marley disappears.)

SCROOGE: (Humbling!) I must be getting old. This couldn't be true. I don't believe a word of it. There are no such things as ghosts! I must have been dreaming.]

(SCROOGE gets into bed)

NARRATOR: Scrooge falls asleep.

Spirit of Christmas Past enters and stands next to Scrooge's bed.

SPIRIT: (in a low deep voice, very eerie and scary):

Ebenezer Scrooge, your time has come. Awake!

7 SCROOGE: ~~X~~ Humph! You have some nerve  
waking me up in the middle of the  
night! Who are you anyhow?

SPIRIT: (slowly & eerily): I am the Spirit  
of Christmas Past. You had better  
follow me.

(Scrooge reluctantly follows the spirit.)

Music: hummed softly

IIa  
NARRATOR: The Spirit leads Scrooge down the  
road the past until they come to an  
old schoolhouse.

SCROOGE: ~~X~~ Now I know where we are. This  
is the school I went to when I was a  
little boy.

(Scrooge and Spirit stand at one side)

Enter Scrooge the Child. He folds up the  
blanket and pulls the chair over to the  
desk (which was formerly Scrooge's  
bed.) He sits at the desk and buries  
his face in his hands.

SPIRIT: Do you know who that poor boy is -  
all alone on Christmas Eve?

SCROOGE: ~~X~~ Of course, I know who it is.  
It's me, a long time ago. Poor little boy -  
all alone with no friends. Really wid...]

SPIRIT: Go on - what do you wish?

SCROOGE: ~~X~~ Oh, it's too late now.]

SPIRIT: You had better tell me anyhow.

SCROOGE (hesitating): ~~X~~ Well - there was a  
boy in front of my house last night  
singing a Christmas Carol. I wish I  
had given him a coin or two -  
that's all.]

(Exit Scrooge the Child)

6/SPIRIT: Hummmmm! Come on — I want to show you another Christmas.

NARRATOR: The Spirit takes Scrooge to the warehouse where Scrooge had worked when he was young.

Enter Scrooge the Teenager with Dick and Mr. Fezziwig. The boys carry in brooms and start sweeping. Fezziwig sits on top of the desk. (This desk is the same one used by Scrooge the Child). Scrooge and Spirit stand and watch while Dick and young Scrooge sweep.)

SCROOGE: Hey, that's my old boss, Mr. Fezziwig! And Dick — the boy who used to work with me.

FEZZIWIG: No more work tonight, boys. Did you put fuel on the fire?

DICK: yes, sir

FEZZIWIG: Good. Then we're almost ready for our Christmas party. Let's make some room here.

Cheney & Dick push the desk to the back of the stage  
Sound! Talk & laughter followed by singing "Deck the Halls."

NARRATOR: Here comes Mrs. Fezziwig and everyone who works in the company. (a fiddler may come in first, (optional))

Mrs. F. enters from right, followed by the children — those in the class who don't have another part. Everyone talks at once, wishing each other a Merry Xmas, a Happy New Year —

Exit — all children, Dick, young Scrooge & the Fezziwigs

SPRIT: That Fezzwing must have been an old  
fool!

SCROOGE ~~X~~ An old fool! That's not true - he was a  
wonderful man. Why, I remember the time when  
-- (He stops short.)

SPRIT: What's the matter? Why did you stop talking?

SCROOGE ~~X~~ Nothing - I was just thinking about my  
clerk, Bob Cratchit.]

SPRIT: I must go - your next visitor will be the  
spirit of Christmas present.

SCROOGE ~~X~~ NO! NO! DON'T leave me Spirit Please.] -

(Spirit exits with arms outstretched. Scrooge  
(a bright light shines into Scrooge's eyes) goes to bed)

Loud gong sounds. Scrooge sets up & covers eyes.  
SCROOGE (in a loud frightened whisper) ~~X~~ What's that  
strange bright light?]

(Scrooge gets out of bed. Spirit of Xmas Present  
enters)

SPRIT: Ebenezer Scrooge?

SCROOGE ~~X~~ yes.]

SPRIT: (pleasantly): It is I. I want you to get to know  
me better.

SCROOGE: (frightenedly) ~~X~~ Are -- are you the Spirit of  
Xmas present?]

SPRIT: I am. Come closer. Have no fear.

SCROOGE: (still frightened) ~~X~~ What do you want? ~~X~~  
And why have you come? (He looks around  
the room.) What have you done to my room?  
This mistletoe & holly --- the huge warm fire --  
a Christmas tree. ]

SPRIT: Come with me.

SCROOGE ~~X~~ (meekly) I'm coming, dear Spirit.]

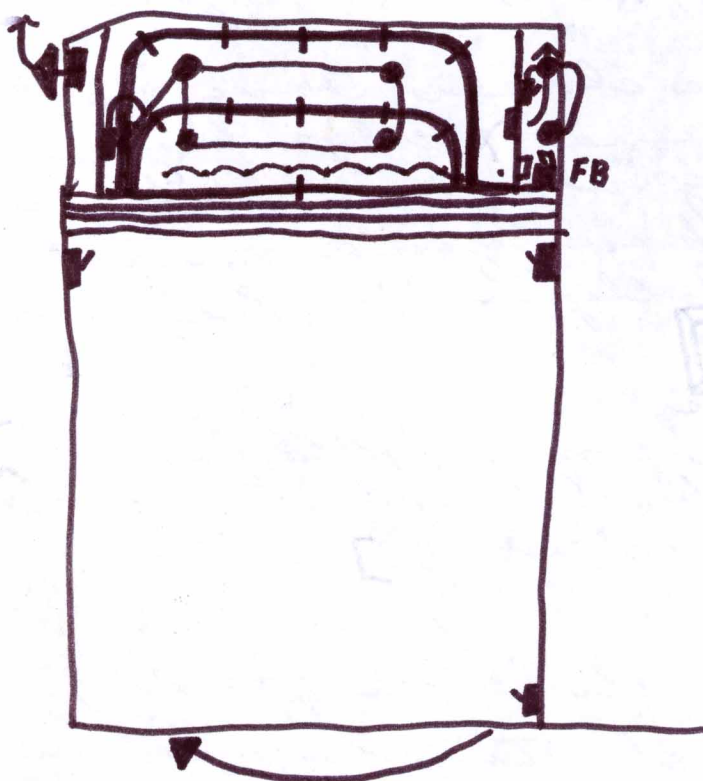
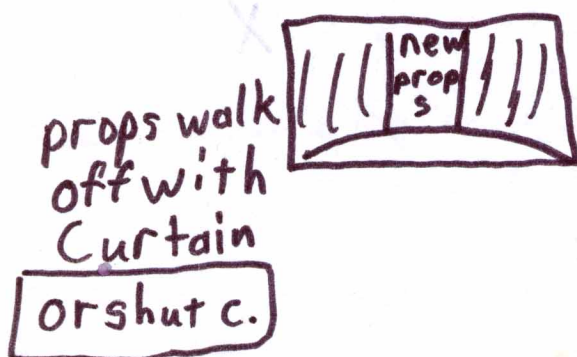
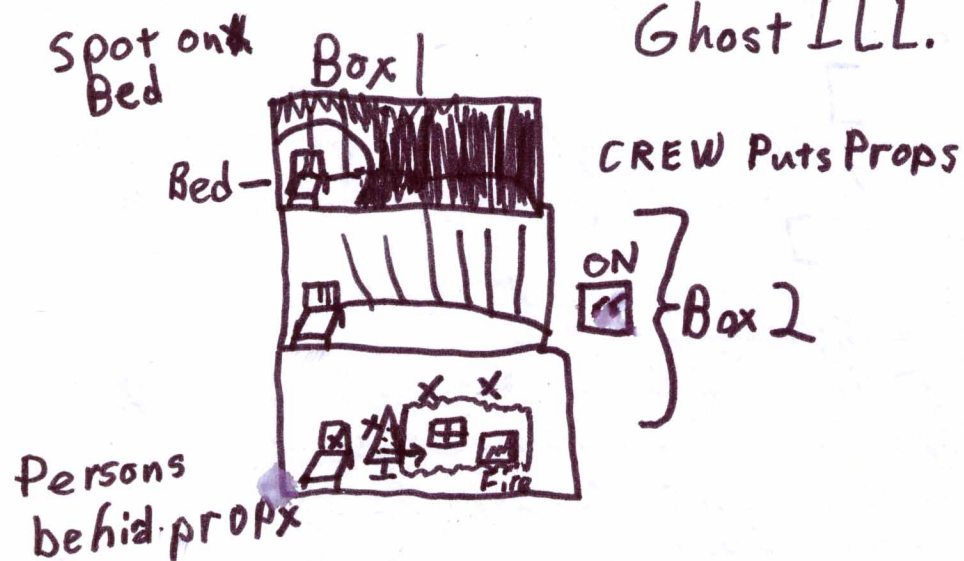
SPRIT: I wish my robe. (Scrooge touches his robe).

SCROOGE ~~X~~ Where are we going?]

GHOST: You'll soon see.

While Scrooge & the Spirit speak the  
following lines, the stage can be set with  
cardboard walls with cracks & a window  
with one pane covered by cardboard.

# Ghost ILL.



8) music softly -

SPIRIT: Here we are.

SCROOGE ~~x~~ Why this is Bob Cratchit's house. 1  
Scrooge and Spirit stand at side of stage. (Frick)

SCROOGE ~~x~~ Why are you waving your torch? What are you doing? 1

SPIRIT: I am the spirit of Christmas and I am blessing this house.

SCROOGE ~~x~~ But why? Bob is only a clerk. He earns just a few dollars a week. Why should his house be blessed? 1

SPIRIT: Watch! you will soon see why Bob Cratchit's house deserves to be blessed.

(Music - fades out)

(All Cratchits neatly but shabbily dressed) (Enter Peter - he stirs pot on stove. Two more Cratchits see it. Mother puts ragged tablecloth on table)

PETER: Boy! I can't wait to eat!

MRS. CRATCHIT: I wonder what's keeping your brother, Tiny Tim. And why is your sister Martha so late on Christmas Day?

TWO CRATCHITS - Here comes Martha's mother! Hurrah!  
(Martha enters)

TWO CRATCHITS - You ought to see what a beautiful goose we're going to have, Martha!

MRS C. Why are you so late, dear?

MARTHA: Because the hat shop was really busy last night and we had to put it in order this morning before we could leave. Oh it's good to be home.

TWO CRAT: Quick! Here comes father! Hide, Martha!  
(Martha hides under table.)

Bob enters carrying Tiny Tim piggyback style + TINY TIM is carrying a little cratch)

BOB: Hello, my dear! How's my wonderful family? (Looks around) Why, where's my Martha?

MRS CRATCHIT: (smiling) She can't come.

BOB: (sadly) Can't come? Can't come on Xmas Day?

9/ MARTHA: (running out from table): Here I am, Father!  
(all clap & laugh)  
MRS CRATCHIT: Now who will go to the lake house & fetch the goose?  
TWO YOUNGER CRATCHITS: I will, me too!  
TINY TIM: (shyly): Can I go too, please?  
TWO CRATCHITS: Sure! Come on! Let's get over lovely goose before someone else does -  
(Exit - 2 CRATCHITS & TINY TIM)  
MRS. CRATCHIT: And how did Tiny Tim behave in church?  
BOB: He was as good as gold. He's such a cheerful patient little fellow. (Both parents wipe eyes)  
(Two Cratchits & TINY TIM return carrying very small goose & singing. Here come the Goose) Let's have some bread Martha & Mrs Cratchit bring potatoes & apples to table - all sit down  
TWO YOUNGER: Our very own goose! And fried apples! And potatoes! And even chestnuts!  
BOB (raising glass) A Merry Xmas to us all, my dears. God Bless us.  
(Everyone lifts glass - No 2 alike)  
TINY TIM: God bless us, everyone!  
(Everyone drinks & eats. - (Telling - I get a drumstick, Pass the potatoes please. I want with bone - Isn't it delicious.  
Light focuses on Scrooge & Spirit.  
SCROOGE: [Spirit, will Tiny Tim live? X  
SPIRIT: I see an empty little stool in the corner and a little crutch lying beside the stool. If things go on the way they are now Tiny Tim will certainly die.  
SCROOGE: X No spirit! No! Please say he will live! ]  
(Back to feast)  
BOB: And now a toast to Mr Scrooge, the founder of our feast.  
MRS CRATCHIT: (bitterly) The founder of our feast indeed! If that skinflint were here now, I'd give him some words to feast on!  
BOB: Come now, dear. It's Christmas Day

19/MRS. CRATCHIT: It's only because it's Xmas that I'll visit a selfish, mean, old, stingy, rotten man good luck. And of all people, you should know, Bob.

BOB: Martha dear, it's Xmas --- and the children ---

MRS CRATCHIT: All right. For your sake I'll visit him a long and healthy life.

(no one speaks - all raise glasses - long silence)

BOB: Tch! Tch! Tch --- This isn't the same Cratchit family that I know. Come on now! Let's all sing a song.

EVERYONE: Good idea! Yes!

all sing & clap hands & sway back & forth

Lights fade - table is cleared.

NARRATOR: (as spirit of Christmas Present & Scrooge walk away)

The spirit of Xmas Present took Scrooge to visit other poor homes where he saw children who had no shoes & were cold & shivering with only bread & water to eat for Xmas dinner. Finally, Scrooge could bear it no longer.

SCROOGE: X Enough of the misery - No more, please!

SPIRIT: I must leave now.

SCROOGE X But --- but wait! (Spirit exits)

(Sad music) (Scrooge sets on floor, head in hands)

Slowly enters Spirit of Xmas yet to come.

SCROOGE X (with fear) Oh - you must be the Spirit of Christmas - yet - to - come! I am afraid of you most of all! But - But maybe you will help me!

(The Spirit has carried in a leadboard gravestone. He puts it on the chair)

SCROOGE X (surprised) One lonely gravestone. How sad it looks with weeds all around - as though no one cares. (He looks closer) A name - I can hardly read it - it's so dusty

(Wipe dust off & is horrified) Why it's Ebenezer Scrooge!

Oh no! Spirit! Please! I will change. I will not be stingy and selfish and greedy and mean.

Please! I will honor Xmas & I'll act as if it's Christmas every single day. Please let me take the writing off! (Scrooge tries to catch the ash of Spirit but

Spirit walks slowly backwards & exits)

SCROOGE X Wait - Spirit, please wait!

1) Act III

Uncertain opens, stage is bright like daylight +  
Scrooge is in bed.

SCROOGE (waking) X Where am I? This bed - it's mine -  
my very own. And this room! It's mine too! Now I  
will change. I will live differently to make up  
for the past! The present will change, and the future  
too! (Starts dancing around happily.) Oh! I feel so  
good! (Runs toward audience and pretends to open a  
window.)

SCROOGE X Hey! Boy! What day is this? (Boy enters & stands as they talk across the stage.) Why it's  
Xmas.

SCROOGE: (to audience) X Christmas! How wonderful! I  
haven't missed Xmas after all. X To boy X Hey you're  
man! you know the butcher shop down the block?

Boy: yes sir!

SCROOGE: (to audience) X What a smart child! (to boy) X  
Well, do you know that wonderful turkey in the  
window?

Boy: The little one?

SCROOGE X No the big one.

Boy: Oh, you mean the one as big as me?

SCROOGE X yes - that's the one! (to audience) X What a  
smart child! (to boy) X Well, run & tell the man to

bring that turkey here. If you bring the man  
fast, I'll give you a quarter.

Boy: Wow!

SCROOGE X and if you're back in less than five minutes,  
I'll give you a dollar!

Boy: Wow! a whole dollar! (Runs off)

SCROOGE X I'll send it to Bob Cratchit. It's two times  
as big as Jerry Tim! Now they won't starve even  
when the goose is gone. And now I'll go eat with  
my nephew Fred. They won't believe it's really me -  
mean old Ebenezer Scrooge!

Boy comes back with turkey & butcher.

Boy! Hey! We're here.

(Scrooge runs over to them & gives boy dollar & lots of money to the butcher)

Boy! Wow! A whole dollar!

SCROOGE: (to butcher) \*Take this bird to the Bob Cratchit house

BUTCHER: Yes sir! Thank you sir!

(Butcher & boy exit)

SCROOGE (calling after them) \*And a merry Christmas!

(Stage darkens. Bed is pushed to back of stage. Scrooge takes off nightcap & gown & puts on bright clothes)

NARRATOR: All dressed up, Scrooge left his house. He smiled at everyone he passed.

(Music) \*Meets many people all wish Merry Xmas.

(Fred, Fred's wife, 2 children singing carrying presents  
Four more guests, dance with partners)

SCROOGE \*Anybody home?

FRED! Why, Uncle Scrooge!

SCROOGE \*Is it too late to join you and your lovely family for a nice fattening Xmas dinner?

FRED: (a little stunned) I must be seeing things!

(to his wife)  
Darling, it's Uncle Scrooge! (to Scrooge) Of course not! Come in and join our party!  
(Music & laughter)

Act IV

Scrooge's office

NARRATOR: The next day, Scrooge is in the office bright and early. He wants to be there so he can catch Cratchit coming in late.

(Curtain opens)

(Scrooge is sitting at desk, arms folded. Cratchit runs in & sits down and starts to work. He is wearing a long muffler)