

His family gathers around him as he sets the brace and the crutch down on the bed to embrace them. The bed, platform and Cratchits move away, leaving Scrooge alone, staring at the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come. It is at this point that Scrooge begins to understand what has happened to him. What comes next is not a surprise to him. Toward Scrooge moves a grave, like Marley's grave at the beginning of the play.)

SCROOGE. Before I draw nearer to this grave, answer me one question, Spirit. Are these the shadows of Things That Must Be or are they shadows of Things that May Be Only? Answer me! (The Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come moves back into the great black shadow that has loomed above everything, pointing as he goes, and disappears. Scrooge goes to the grave. He kneels and brushes dirt away from its level, brass headstone. Reads.) Scrooge. (He stands up.) Oh, Spirits, wherever you be, hear me! I am not the man I was! I will not be the man I have been! Why can I not change what you have shown me? (Scrooge turns and faces the huge black figure behind him. Light glows behind it, making it an even more formidable presence.) Why show me all this if I am past all hope? (A crashing dissonant chord. Scrooge runs to the figure, seizes its cloth substance and pulls the whole great thing down to the floor. It parts in the middle. Each side is whipped offstage and is gone. Blackout! Sound: tremendous noise, reverberating! Lights whirl around the proscenium! Every possible effect! Silence. As the reverberations die away, slow light discovers Scrooge, eyes closed, holding on to one of the bedposts of his bed, which sits alone now on the stage, backed by a vanity stool.) Spirit! Spirit! I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all year! I will live in the Past, the Present and the Future! I will not shut out the lessons you have taught me! Spirit! (Pause.) Ah! Where am I now? A bedpost. My bedpost! My curtains, not torn down! Am I home again, with everything just as it was, my bed, my room, my house! No. It's different. I'm different. But how? I don't know, exactly, but I am. How long was I among the Spirits? I don't know. I don't know anything. I don't have to know anything. I'm just a baby, a child again! Newborn, me? Scrooge?? Never mind. Good. I don't care! I'll be a child! (D. below Scrooge and his bed, the Boy who sings the carol appears in a spotlight.)

Begin

BOY. (SINGING)  
NOEL, NOEL.  
NOEL, NOEL.

BORN IS A CHILD IN ISRAEL.

SCROOGE. Hallo there! You! You there!

BOY. Wot? (Scrooge reaches into the curtains of the bed and pulls out his long overcoat, his scarf and a cap.)  
SCROOGE. My fine fellow!

BOY. Yis?

SCROOGE. My boy!

BOY. Yis? (Scrooge goes to the Boy, dressed in coat, scarf, cap, but still wearing his slippers and nightshirt underneath.)  
SCROOGE. What's today?

BOY. Today? It's Christmas day. Ye daft?

SCROOGE. It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! They did it all in one night! Of course they did. Spirits can do anything they like!

BOY. Wot?

SCROOGE. They did! Do you hear me?

BOY. Yis, yis, I hear you!

SCROOGE. Now then, my boy!

BOY. Yis?  
SCROOGE. Do you know the poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?

BOY. I should hope I do!

SCROOGE. Intelligent boy. Remarkable boy. Do you know if they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging in the window? Not the little prize turkey! I mean the great big enormous one!

BOY. Wot, the one big as me?

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

BOY. It's 'anging there now!

SCROOGE. Go and buy it!

BOY. Not bloody likely!!

SCROOGE. No, no! I'm in earnest! Money! See?

BOY. Oooooooo!

SCROOGE. I put it in this pouch. Go buy the turkey. Then take it, IN A CAB —

BOY. Ina CAB, Oooooo!

SCROOGE. To Camden Town, to the little house of Robert Cratchit. If he's not at home, find out where he is. Give him the turkey. And keep the rest of the money for yourself. Can you do that?

BOY. Bloody likely, Guv'ni! (*Scrooge slaps the pouch in his hand!*)

SCROOGE. Run, as I used to run, when I was you! Run!

BOY. I'm off!!! (*The Boy dashes off. Scrooge thinks, takes stock of himself. He is feeling a new, slow, blossoming feeling: happiness.*)

SCROOGE. Bob Cratchit won't know who sent it! Hee hee! (*Suddenly, Scrooge stops himself.*) What am I doing? This isn't me! Is it? I feel very strange. I'm not used to being — this way. Can I do this? Yes, I can! And I'll get better at it! I will! (*Pause. He thinks of something very funny.*) Ha ha! That turkey! It's the size — it's

TWICE the size of Tiny Tim! Ha ha! (*Stops, thinks.*) Tiny Tim. Is the boy still alive? I am still alive. If the boy in me is still alive, so Tiny Tim must be alive, too. Yes! That's it! I'm off, like a shot! (*Wind. Scrooge's bed and room move off. A confusion of street voices and muffled carols in a sound montage. The colors on the proscenium begin to glow again and light up. A slow procession of Christmas decorations begins now to descend, reaching only at the end of the play, the spectacle of a huge cornucopia of trees, presents, wreaths, food, and everything good about Christmas, hanging before us against a sky turning a beautiful deep blue. Carols, very low at first, begin to be heard. The streets. Enter to one upper corner of the stage, Gentleman 1 and*

*Gentleman 2. Scrooge rushes past them.*)

GENTLEMAN 1. Who was that?

GENTLEMAN 2. Scrooge.

GENTLEMAN 1. Oh, dear. (*Scrooge runs back to them.*)

SCROOGE. Gentlemen, gentlemen, how do you do? (*He takes both men by the hand.*) I hope you succeeded in your fund raising for the poor yesterday. Merry Christmas to you both!

GENTLEMAN 1. (*Surprised.*) Mr. Scrooge?

End

GENTLEMAN 2. (*Equally so.*) Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE. That's my name, not very pleasant to hear. Let me change that. First, I beg your pardon for my neglect of your cause. Second, will you allow me to donate — (*He whispers in their ears. Their faces brighten.*)

GENTLEMAN 1. Why, Mr. Scrooge!

GENTLEMAN 2. Are you serious?

SCROOGE. Not a farthing less! Includes a great many back payments, you see! (*They pump his hand.*)

GENTLEMAN 1. Thank you, sir!

GENTLEMAN 2. We don't know what to say!

SCROOGE. Don't say anything. Just come and see me, about future contributions! Will you do that?

GENTLEMAN 1 and 2. WE WILL!!

SCROOGE. Thanked! Much obliged! Bless you. I'm off! (*Exit Gentlemen 1 and 2 and Scrooge. Enter to another upper corner of the stage, Caroline and Husband. Enter Scrooge.*) Ah-ha! You two!

HUSBAND. Oh, my God.

CAROLINE. Scrooge!

SCROOGE. Don't try to run away! You owe me money! A lot of money! See that you pay it! Some day. Ha ha! Some day soon. Ha ha! Or some day not so soon! Ha ha ha! As a matter of fact, come to my office tomorrow and we'll tear up that contract and make another. Or just tear up that contract!

Ha ha! Merry Christmas! God bless you! (*Scrooge kisses both heartily on the cheek.*) Yes! I can do this! (*Scrooge dashes off. Caroline and Husband stare at each other, and exit. Enter Nephew and Niece, to a lower corner of the stage. Enter Scrooge.*) Fred!

NEPHEW. Uncle?

SCROOGE. Merry Christmas, Fred. May I come to dinner?

NIECE. May you what?

SCROOGE. If you can stand me.

NEPHEW. On one condition.

SCROOGE. What's that?

NEPHEW. That it be not just this Christmas, but all the rest. Dinner with your family on Christmas Day, Uncle!

SCROOGE. With all my heart!