



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

DRAMA (US)

0428/11/T/PRE

Paper 1 Set Text

May/June 2012

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL

To be given to candidates on receipt by the Center.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the three stimuli and on the extract from Christopher Durang's play *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* provided in this booklet.

You may do any preparatory work that is considered appropriate. It is recommended that you perform the extract, at least informally.

You will **not** be permitted to take this copy of the text **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.

A clean copy of the text will be provided with the Question Paper.

This document consists of **24** printed pages.



STIMULI

You are required to produce a short piece of drama on each stimulus in preparation for your written examination. Questions will be asked on **each** of the stimuli and will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

1. Made to Measure
2. As Dead as a Dodo
3. Ship Ahoy!

EXTRACT

Taken from *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* by Christopher Durang

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Christopher Durang's contemporary American play *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* was written in 2002. The play is a fast-moving comedy that relies on witty banter between the characters, as well as a good deal of misunderstanding between them.

Durang describes the play as "a playful re-imagining of the Dickens classic *A Christmas Carol*, in which the usually long-suffering Mrs. Cratchit—who in the Dickens story says almost nothing and sits in a chair knitting while poor crippled Tiny Tim Cratchit limps around the house—has become imbued with a feisty rejection of all the endless suffering around her and proclaims her desire to get drunk and then jump into the River Thames."

Charles Dickens's original story is set in London in the 1840s and tells of an old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge, and his mistreatment of his employees, especially Bob Cratchit. Scrooge is visited by three ghosts, who show him his past, present, and future in order to convince him of the error of his ways and of the need to change.

The style of Christopher Durang's drama is quite different from Dickens's serious and sentimental story. Inspired by farce, it makes fun of the original version and adds some bizarre and exaggerated twists to the original plot. It also brings in the characters of *Oliver Twist* and *Little Nell*, both from other novels by Dickens.

The extract consists of an abridged version of Act One. The original contains a number of songs, which are almost entirely omitted here. Where fragments of song are retained, the words may be sung to any tune considered appropriate.

Characters (in order of appearance)

Young Jacob Marley (*child*)
 Young Ebenezer Scrooge (*child*)
 The Ghost
 Ebenezer Scrooge
 Bob Cratchit
 Tiny Tim
 Mrs. Bob Cratchit
 Child 1 (*Cratchit Child*)
 Child 2 (*Cratchit Child*)
 Gentleman 1
 Gentleman 2
 Jacob Marley's Ghost
 Mr. Fezziwig
 Mrs. Fezziwig
 The Fezziwigs' two daughters
 The Beadle (a character from Dickens's *Oliver Twist*)
 The Beadle's Wife (a character from Dickens's *Oliver Twist*)
 Little Nell (a deeply tragic character from Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*)

ACT I

SCENE 1

Christmastime. Dickens look, 1840s. A street in Victorian London. Two YOUNG BOYS, dressed in coats, hats, and scarfs, stand next to each other. One boy is singing.

BOY 1:	<i>(singing sweetly)</i> <i>Hark the Herald Angels sing</i> <i>Glory to the new born king</i>	5
BOY 2:	<i>(irritated, negative)</i> Bah, humbug! Bah, humbug!	
BOY 1:	<i>(singing)</i> <i>Peace on earth, and mercy mild</i>	
BOY 2:	Phooey! Christmas stinks! Kaplooey!	10
BOY 1:	<i>(singing)</i> <i>God and sinner reconciled</i>	
BOY 2:	Bah humbug! Get me a good hamburger!	
BOY 1:	<i>(continues with the song softly)</i> <i>Enter the GHOST—a striking, theatrical black woman. She addresses the audience.</i>	15
GHOST:	Even as a child, young Ebenezer displayed a pronounced antipathy toward Christmas. <i>(to Boy 2)</i> Merry Christmas, Ebenezer.	
YOUNG EBENEZER:	Bah humbug! Give me some Christmas pudding. I want to put bugs in your hair! Bah humbug!	20
GHOST:	In later centuries, we would probably identify Ebenezer's repeated saying of "Bah humbug" as a kind of seasonal Tourette's syndrome. However, in 1843, when our story is set, we hadn't a clue what it meant—except he was a nasty little child.	25
YOUNG EBENEZER:	Bah humbug! I hate Christmas!	
GHOST:	<i>(to audience)</i> Hello. I am the Ghost of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet To Come, including all media yet to be invented. If you get me on DVD you can click on Special Features, and see twenty-seven other hairdo choices I have. But we're in a live theater presently, so you'll just have to accept my hair as it is.	30
YOUNG EBENEZER:	I want to put bugs in your hair!	
GHOST:	Children are so difficult, aren't they? You should see them backstage. I'm so glad I'm a ghost and I don't have any children.	35
BOY 1:	I like Christmas carols, but my friend Ebenezer is slowly convincing me to hate Christmas.	
GHOST:	<i>(points to Boy 1)</i> This is young Jacob Marley. And he and Ebenezer will grow up to run a business together.	40
YOUNG EBENEZER:	I want to be very wealthy.	
YOUNG JACOB:	Me too!	
GHOST:	Oh you kids. I'd like to take a strap to you. But all you politically correct types don't like that. A good spanking never hurt a child, unless it got out of control and killed him, in which case it did. But I don't want to kill these children, I just want to make them behave. <i>(screams at the children)</i> BEHAVE!!! AND HAVE A BETTER ATTITUDE ABOUT CHRISTMAS!	45
YOUNG EBENEZER:	I hate Christmas. Bah, humbug.	50
GHOST:	You need to learn to be seen and not heard. <i>(to audience)</i> And now meet Ebenezer Scrooge, grown up.	

	<i>Enter old EBENEZER SCROOGE. He is sour, grumpy, cranky.</i>	
	Hello there, Mr. Scrooge. Merry Christmas to you.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Bah humbug! I'd like to put bugs in your hair!	55
GHOST:	Really, how strange. What kind of bugs?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh awful crawling kinds. Beetles. Spiders.	
GHOST:	Uh-huh. Mr. Scrooge, I'd like you to meet your inner child.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	What?	
GHOST:	<i>(to Young Ebenezer)</i> Say hello to your grown-up self, Ebenezer.	60
YOUNG EBENEZER:	I hate you! <i>(kicks him)</i>	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	And I hate you, you little creep!	
	<i>Ebenezer and Young Ebenezer struggle with each other. Young Jacob looks on, passively.</i>	65
GHOST:	<i>(to audience)</i> What unpleasant people. I wonder if I'll be able to make them appreciate the true meaning of Christmas before the end of the evening. What do you think? How many of you don't care? Never mind, I don't want to know. I have a job to do, and I've got to do it. Okay, you two, break it up.	70
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	You should be sent to the workhouse!	
YOUNG EBENEZER:	You should be sent to a nursing home!	
GHOST:	Isn't it sad? Isn't it poignant and ironic how much Mr. Scrooge's younger and older selves hate each other? <i>(to Young Ebenezer and Ebenezer)</i> You're dealing with self-hatred, you two, and you don't even know it!	75
YOUNG JACOB:	Why don't I have any lines?	
GHOST:	Why does the sun come up in the morning?	
YOUNG JACOB:	I don't know.	
GHOST:	Well, that's why you don't have any lines. Okay, enough of this scene. Let's move on to the next one. Ready, Mr. Scrooge?	80
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Shut up, I don't know you. I don't think there even are black people in 1840s London.	
GHOST:	I stand outside of time.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Well good for you. I haven't time for this, I'm on my way to work.	85
GHOST:	Merry Christmas.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Bah! Humbug!	
YOUNG EBENEZER:	Bah! Humbug!	
	<i>Scrooge exits, followed by Young Ebenezer and Young Jacob.</i>	90
GHOST:	Luckily, you know, most people aren't like Mr. Scrooge here. They love Christmas as I do, and as I hope you do too. <i>Music begins. The Ghost looks around the stage in pleasant wonderment.</i>	
	<i>LONDON TOWNSPEOPLE start to come in and gather. They mill about in groups; they wander. They point at things in the set. A wandering person may be selling toys. The children point at them. They're all very happy and interested in Christmas.</i>	95
	<i>The CRATCHIT family, who have been part of the above, have now milled about into a center place so they may be featured.</i>	100
	<i>It's BOB CRATCHIT, helping TINY TIM on his crutch. And MRS. BOB CRATCHIT is being warm and motherly to two of her other children, CHILD 1 (girl) and CHILD 2 (boy).</i>	105
GHOST:	<i>(sings)</i> <i>Here are the Cratchits</i> <i>Bob and Tiny Tim</i>	

	<i>It's sweet and it's touching</i>	
	<i>Bob watches over him</i>	110
	<i>This is only a glimpse</i>	
	<i>Sad to say, the child limps</i>	
	<i>It's not quite clear if there's a cure</i>	
	<i>Still Tiny Tim, his heart is pure</i>	
TINY TIM:	<i>(spoken)</i> Anything sad or bad I just ignore. I love Christmas.	115
BOB CRATCHIT:	I know you do, Tiny Tim. And your mother and I love it too. Don't we, dear?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(not realizing she was going to be asked to speak)</i> Oh yes. What? We love Christmas very much. <i>(slightly weak smile, she's a bit tired)</i>	120
	<i>Mr. Scrooge comes back onstage, still needing to get to work. He didn't mean to come back this route and is horrified to see everyone.</i>	
A CHILD:	Look—it's Mr. Scrooge!	
THE CRATCHITS AND LONDON TOWNSPEOPLE:	<i>(spoken)</i> MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. SCROOGE!	125
	<i>Mr. Scrooge is horrified, and it makes him nauseous. He starts to need to vomit, covers his mouth with his hand, runs offstage.</i>	
	<i>(disappointed in his response)</i> Ahhhhhhhhhhh.	130
TINY TIM:	Mr. Scrooge doesn't know how to celebrate Christmas, does he, Father?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(laughs)</i> Indeed he does not, Tiny Tim! <i>Everyone smiles delighted. Mrs. Bob Cratchit smiles also, but it seems a little strained.</i>	135
TINY TIM:	God bless us, everyone! <i>Everyone looks even more delighted. Mrs. Bob Cratchit looks at him, slightly sick of him, but it's subtle. It's possible we might not notice. She's trying to be agreeable and to love Christmas, mostly. It's just that, like her clothes, her nerves are threadbare.</i>	140
GHOST:	And God bless you, Tiny Tim! <i>Tiny Tim beams. In the following, done in a very musical comedy kind of way, Mrs. Bob Cratchit gamely moves with everyone else, but is a bit out of synch sometimes. She does not sing along with them.</i>	145
EVERYONE:	<i>(except for Mrs. Bob Cratchit) (sings)</i> <i>It's nearly Christmas</i> <i>The reindeer and the sleigh</i> <i>Let nothing you dismay</i>	150
	<i>It's nearly Christmas</i> <i>The jingle bells ding ding</i> <i>Let's go a-caroling</i> <i>It's time-consuming, true</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(spoken, to audience)</i> Yes, it is.	155
EVERYONE:	<i>(except for Mrs. Bob Cratchit) (sings)</i> <i>It makes some people blue</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(spoken, to audience)</i> Well, a little.	
EVERYONE:	<i>(except for Mrs. Bob Cratchit) (sings)</i> <i>And yet we wouldn't have it any other way!</i>	160
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(spoken, to audience, laughs)</i> Well I would!	
EVERYONE:	<i>(except for Mrs. Bob Cratchit) (sings)</i> <i>We love Christmas</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(spoken, suddenly uncertain)</i> Did I turn the oven off?	

EVERYONE:	(<i>except for Mrs. Bob Cratchit</i>) (<i>sings</i>) <i>We love Christmas</i>	165
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	(<i>spoken, looking around worried</i>) Ohhhh! Where are the children???	
EVERYONE:	(<i>except for Mrs. Bob Cratchit</i>) (<i>sings</i>) <i>We love Christmas</i> (<i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit decides to join in on the final words of the song.</i>)	170
EVERYONE:	(<i>sings</i>) <i>Christmas day!</i> (<i>Townspeople all disperse, waving at one another or maybe the audience. Mrs. Bob Cratchit fiddles with Bob Cratchit's long scarf, making sure he's warm. Then she leads Tiny Tim and the other two children off while Bob goes off in the same direction Scrooge had exited. Set change starts.</i>)	175
GHOST:	Well I hope you enjoyed that. Sometimes I prefer to sing a Billie Holiday song, but "Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do" doesn't seem very Christmas-y. So it's time to begin our journey of redeeming Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge. And the first place we should go is his place of work, the office of Scrooge and Marley. Because Mr. Scrooge felt sick to his stomach, luckily Bob Cratchit was able to get there first. (<i>seeing the set is complete:</i>) Ah, and here's the set change.	180
SCENE 2	 <i>Scrooge's office.</i> <i>Bob Cratchit, a mild-mannered, suffering blob of a man, sits at his desk, shivering, and writing in a notebook.</i> <i>Nearby, set off somewhat, is Scrooge's desk. Near his desk TWO GENTLEMEN in top coats are standing, waiting for him.</i> <i>Scrooge enters in a bad mood.</i>	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Good morning, Mr. Scrooge.	190
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	You still alive, Bob Cratchit? You haven't died of pneumonia yet?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Well I'm very cold, it's true, Mr. Scrooge. Might we put another coal on the fire?	200
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	No we may not. I am not made of money, Bob Cratchit. A little cold never hurt anyone.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	I have this sort of pain right in the middle of my chest every time I breathe in the cold air.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Really? Well when you're about to fall over dead, tell me, so I can go out and hire your replacement.	205
BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, sir. Oh, Mr. Scrooge, there are two gentlemen to see you, sir.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	What did I tell you about letting people wait for me in my office?	210
BOB CRATCHIT:	You said not to do it.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	And so why did you do it?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	I have trouble saying no to people, Mr. Scrooge.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Slap yourself in the face, Bob Cratchit.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	I'd rather not, Mr. Scrooge.	215
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Don't say no to me.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Very well, sir. <i>Bob Cratchit slaps himself in the face.</i>	

EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Ah, very good. I knew there was some reason I paid you your tiny weekly salary.	220
BOB CRATCHIT:	And why is that, sir?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	You amuse me. Hit yourself again. <i>Bob hits himself again.</i>	
	Oh very good. You're starting to put me in a good mood. Now, let me go be abusive to the gentlemen in my office. <i>Scrooge goes into his office area. The two gentlemen speak to him.</i>	225
GENTLEMAN 1:	Good morning, Mr. Scrooge. Merry Christmas.	
GENTLEMAN 2:	Merry Christmas to you, sir.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Bah humbug! I want to put bugs in your hair.	230
GENTLEMAN 1:	What kind of bugs, sir?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh, disgusting horrible ones who'll emit some sort of terrible liquid all over your heads. Hahahahaha. And people say I don't have a sense of humor. What is it you want today, bah-humbug, Christmas-stinks-Christmas-carols-make-me-puke. <i>(aside to Gentleman 1)</i> Goodness, if we lived in another century, I would say this man has Tourette's syndrome.	235
GENTLEMAN 2:		
GENTLEMAN 1:	Mr. Scrooge, we are fellow businessmen collecting for charity. And every Christmas we give a little bit from our pockets to all the poor people who wander throughout London in poverty and despair. And we wondered how much we could put you down for.	240
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Nothing.	
GENTLEMAN 1:	You wish to be anonymous?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	No, no, no—I wish to give nothing. Let the poor go to workhouses, or orphanages or die in the street. I am not my brother's keeper. I am a frugal businessman.	245
GENTLEMAN 1:	Might you be interested in selling energy units with us?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Energy units?	
GENTLEMAN 1:	Mr. Scrooge, let me explain. <i>Explains with energy and some speed.</i>	250
	You see, we take the warmth given off by the candle, say, and we "package" that energy, and then we set up a tax-free corporation in the Bahamas, and then we charge poor people money for the use of these energy units. And we say there's a shortage and we triple the price, and we misstate our earnings and expenses, and our accountant shreds a lot of documents, and ultimately we make enormous profits without actually offering any services whatsoever. And then we all go bankrupt, and we retire as millionaires!	255
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Gentlemen, I am extremely impressed. And I think I'd like to join in your business, and sell these "units of energy." Oh, Bob Cratchit, come in here a minute. <i>Bob Cratchit comes in.</i>	260
BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, Your Grace?	265
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	What is your weekly salary, Bob Cratchit?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	You pay me eleven shillings, sir.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Well from now on I am paying you six shillings, Bob.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Why is that, sir?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	I'm deducting five shillings from your salary, and purchasing some energy units for you and your family.	270
BOB CRATCHIT:	Thank you, sir. And what are energy units so I may tell hardworking, exhausted Mrs. Cratchit when I see her next?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Energy units, Bob, are like the warmth from a candle. I know	

	how cold you say you always are, so I'm buying you some heat. And I'm charging you five shillings for it.	275
BOB CRATCHIT:	Energy units and more warmth. Oh I think Mrs. Cratchit will be delighted to hear this, sir.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Merry Christmas, Bob, hahaha, humbug, kaplooeey.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, Mr. Scrooge, thank you very much. <i>Bob Cratchit goes back to his desk.</i>	280
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Our first customer.	
GENTLEMAN 1:	<i>(offers his hand to Scrooge)</i> Mr. Scrooge, I believe we've found a business partner.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Merry Christmas! There, I can say it in celebration as long as it's a nasty thing I'm celebrating. Hooray for more money for me, and less for everybody else!	285
BOTH GENTLEMEN:	Hear, hear, merry Christmas! <i>Lights dim on this scene. The Ghost comes downstage to speak.</i>	290
GHOST:	Wasn't that upsetting? And clearly Mr. Scrooge needs to be changed. So what shall we do next? Well, I think a little visit from his ex-business partner Jacob Marley may be in order, don't you? And some scary noises and some rattling chains. Coming right up.	295
SCENE 3	<i>Scrooge's house. A big wingback chair. Not much else. Maybe a clock on a wall. Enter Scrooge.</i>	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Energy units, what a joke. Oh how I enjoy how stupid people are. Bob Cratchit, you and your children will freeze as much as always and I've cut your salary in half, and you'll thank me for it. Hahahaha. Bah humbug. Now let me sit in my favorite chair and read the announcements of the next public executions. <i>(sits in his chair, looks at a printed list)</i> Ah, next Tuesday, right after breakfast. I can make that one. Ah, my previous housekeeper, put to death for stealing. I will certainly make that one. <i>Offstage, the sound of some ghostly "woooo-ing."</i>	300
OFF-STAGE GHOSTS:	Wooooooooo-ooooo.	305
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	What is that, I wonder?	
OFF-STAGE GHOSTS:	Wooooooooo-ooooo!	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	It must be my imagination. <i>Enter two ghosts, both dressed pathetically, with a "ghostly" sheet with a hole for their heads to poke through; and with a white piece of cloth wrapped from their chin to the top of their heads. One ghost is the size of a man; the other is small, the size of a child. They are JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST and YOUNG JACOB MARLEY from earlier, now dressed as a ghost.</i>	315
THE MARLEY GHOSTS:	Wooooooooo-ooooo. Wooooooooooooo-ooooo.	320
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh Lord, what is this?	
JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST:	Do you recognize me, Ebenezer?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Not really.	325
JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST:	Ebenezer, I am your business partner Jacob Marley, dead these many years.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Well who dressed you, you look ridiculous.	

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: I am condemned to wander the earth, day after day, mourning my past mistakes, never to find rest or peace. *(emits a surprisingly loud cry of anguish)* OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO-OOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! 330

YOUNG JACOB: There, there, older self. Don't feel bad.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Is this young boy your servant?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: He is my tormentor! 335

EBENEZER SCROOGE: He teases you?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: He torments me because I see how sweetly I began, and how empty and callous I ended.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Yes, yes, I see. I'm getting bored with your visit, can you leave?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: You are not afraid to speak to a ghost that way? 340

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Well, are you a ghost? I think you could as easily be a piece of undigested mutton. Or some stomach-churning, unfinished glob of fermenting macaroni.

YOUNG JACOB: What a treat!

EBENEZER SCROOGE: He has few lines, but enjoys the ones he has. Very good, young man, well spoken. 345

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: *(emphatic, full of ghostly scariness)* Scroooooooooooge! I come with a warning. Unless you mend your ways, you will be condemned to the same fate as me—to walk the earth in torment for all your days. Wooooooooooooooooo-oooo, woe——— 350

EBENEZER SCROOGE: *(glib, wanting to be rid of him)* All right, fine, I'll change. Okay?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Ebenezer, you will be visited three times tonight by three separate spirits—or possibly just one spirit, who will come three separate times and change its name each time. Either way, those spirits are your one and only chance to save yourself and escape your horrible fate. 355

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Fine, fine, you've made your point. Please let me rest now.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: The first spirit will come when the clock strikes one. The second spirit will come when the clock strikes two. The third spir— 360

EBENEZER SCROOGE: *(starts pushing them out)* Yes, yes, I get where you're going, thank you for coming. Goodbye, Jacob Marley. Goodbye, mini-Marley. Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye. 365
Scrooge gets the Marley Ghosts offstage. But immediately Jacob Marley's Ghost comes back.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: *(emphatic, needing to complete his thought)* The third spirit will come when the clock strikes three!!! *(glares, exits)*
Scrooge sits back in his chair, suddenly exhausted. 370

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Oh, I am suddenly exhausted! How odd.
His body shifts abruptly, he suddenly nods off to a total sleep.

SCENE 4

EBENEZER SCROOGE: *Lights change. A clock strikes one. Scrooge opens his eyes.* Oh. The clock strikes one. Oh dear. I don't want to see a ghost. 375
Enter the Ghost. She is dressed as a UPS deliveryman.

GHOST: UPS delivery. UPS delivery. Oh, Mr. Scrooge, I have a package.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Really? I was expecting a ghost. But a UPS delivery person is a welcome relief. What is it? 380

GHOST: A Christmas present from all your grateful friends and relatives.

	<i>She offers him a package . . . wrapped like a festive Christmas gift.</i>	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Really? That doesn't seem very likely. (<i>opens it</i>) Ah. A pair of socks. How fascinating. Bah, humbug!	385
GHOST:	Mr. Scrooge, I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	And you're reduced to delivering packages?	
GHOST:	Yes, but with a purpose. Because I am here to teach you various lessons so you can improve your manner of keeping Christmas.	390
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh, you keep Christmas, leave me out of it.	
GHOST:	First of all, the way you receive presents is just no good. Try it again. (<i>offers him a second identical package</i>) Now before opening, you must proclaim in loud and grateful tones how lovely the wrapping is.	395
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	I don't want to.	
	<i>The Ghost reaches over with an electrical zapper and zaps him. Sound effect: Zap! Zap!</i>	
	Aaaaaaaaggggghh! What is that?	400
GHOST:	That is an energy unit that we in the afterlife have fashioned into a zapper. And it zaps painful jolting electric currents through your body. And if you disobey, I shall use it again and again and again. [<i>zap, zap</i>] Now as I said, I want you to make a big fuss over the Christmas wrapping.	405
	<i>Scrooge stares at her with annoyance. She brandishes the zapper again. He gives in, decides to do what she says.</i>	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	(<i>with feigned, if slightly unconvincing, delight</i>) Oh. . . what a lovely package. It is so, so very nice. Very, very, very, very nice.	410
GHOST:	Be more specific.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	It's so . . . colorful. I love the ribbon on it. Ummm . . . what a lovely shade of yellow it is. Makes me think of egg yolk, makes me think of vomit.	
	<i>She zaps him.</i>	415
	Aaaaaaaagggghhhh! Makes me think of daffodils. Lovely, lovely daffodils. What a wonderful package. I . . . I . . . hate even to open it, it's so lovely.	
GHOST:	Much better. Now open it, and then gush about the gift.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	All right. (<i>while he starts to open it</i>) What do you think is in it? It's too light to be a book. What do you think it is? Shall I see? (<i>opens it; takes out a pair of white gym socks</i>) Oh, how marvelous! Socks! Just what I need. I love socks. Thank you so very, very, very much.	420
GHOST:	That was so-so. Gush some more.	425
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Ummmm. I love white socks. They're so . . . clean. And useful. I'm thrilled out of my mind. Out of my mind, I tell you. Is that enough? Can I stop talking about the socks please???	
GHOST:	Yes, you may. For I am the Ghost of Christmas Past, and we have visiting to do. First off, I think we shall go to the Fezziwigs.	430
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh not those loud, awful bores.	
GHOST:	The very ones. Come touch my arm and the set shall change around us.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Very well.	435
	<i>Scrooge touches the Ghost's arm, and there are air-rustling sounds, like racing through space and time. And the set changes around them and we find ourselves at:</i>	

SCENE 5

Bob Cratchit's house. A wooden table, missing a leg but standing nonetheless; it seats perhaps six. A chair or two. Mrs. Bob Cratchit is there, doing needlepoint. A couple of children lie on the floor, a girl and boy.

Scrooge and the Ghost stand in the set, staring at them.

CHILD 1 (*girl*): I'm hungry. 445

CHILD 2 (*boy*): Me too.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: So we're all hungry. What do you want me to do about it?

CHILD 1: Give us some food.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: This isn't the Fezziwigs.

GHOST: You're right, it's not. I seem to have brought us to the wrong place. 450

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Excuse me, who are you?

GHOST: Uh . . . no one. I'm a ghost. You can't see me.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: And I'm just some old man. (*whispers to Ghost*) Why can she see us? 455

GHOST: I don't know, something's wrong. (*to Mrs. Bob Cratchit*) We were looking for the Fezziwigs.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Oh? And who might they be?

GHOST: They were employers of Mr. Scroo . . . of this old gentleman long ago. Tell me, is this the present or the past? 460

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Every day of my life seems the same to me, I haven't a clue if it's the present or the past. Children, are we in the present or the past?

CHILD 1: I'm hungry.

CHILD 2: Feed us! 465

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: All children want to do is eat, it's disgusting. (*screams at them*) WHEN YOUR FATHER FINALLY MAKES SOME MONEY, THEN YOU'LL EAT! AND NOT A MINUTE BEFORE!

GHOST: Oh right, this is Bob Cratchit's house, isn't it?

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: What? 470

GHOST: We're supposed to be here much later. Something's gone awry.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: I'm sorry, who are you and why are you here?

GHOST: (*to Scrooge*) Touch my cloak and I'll try to get us back in time to the Fezziwigs. 475

EBENEZER SCROOGE: What cloak?

GHOST: My arm then, don't be so fussy. Touch my arm. *Scrooge touches the Ghost's arm and there's a large POP sound. Brief flash of light too. Though Scrooge and the Ghost are still there.* 480

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Oh! Where did those two go? The black delivery woman and the old doddering man. Children, did you see them leave?

CHILD 1: I'm hungry.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Shut up. That's strange, I didn't see them leave.

GHOST: Well at least we're invisible now. That part is working again. Touch my arm again, and I'll try to get us to the Fezziwigs. *Scrooge touches her arm. Nothing.* 485

Damn it, I don't know what's the matter.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Children, don't swear.

GHOST: We're here at the Cratchit house way too early. 490

CHILD 2: Father and Tiny Tim are home, I think.

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: I wonder what good news your father will have for Christmas Eve. Maybe Scrooge will have died and named us in his will, ha ha ha.

EBENEZER SCROOGE:	That's rather rude.	495
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(to the children)</i> Did you say something?	
CHILD 1:	No. We didn't say anything.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I thought I heard a voice. Oh heavens, I'm hearing things now.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Can they hear us?	500
GHOST:	They're not supposed to. <i>Enter Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim. Bob has a long, long scarf around his neck that falls to the ground. Tiny Tim is small, carries a little crutch, and limps a lot.</i>	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Gladys, darling, we're home. And Tiny Tim so enjoyed looking in the store windows at all the Christmas treats he can't have. And I only fell on the ground twenty-four times today.	505
TINY TIM:	Why won't you use your crutch, you stupid child?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I don't want people to notice I'm crippled.	
TINY TIM:	And if you fall down twenty-four times, you don't think they'll notice?	510
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Leave me alone.	
TINY TIM:	Let poor Tiny Tim alone, dear. He's a sensitive soul.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	That damn crutch cost half of your weekly salary, and the idiot child won't use it.	515
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I don't need it!	
TINY TIM:	Isn't this a sad family? Do you feel sorry for them?	
GHOST:	Did you hear that?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Hear what, my darling?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	I heard some voice saying we're a sad family.	520
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Oh, and so we are, and proud of it. I see the people on the street point at me and Tiny Tim, and they say, "Look, there goes that man who hasn't money to feed his twenty children, and there's his little cripple child. But he's a kind man," they say.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	If we have so little money, why do you keep adopting children?	525
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I love children. Where are the children?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	They're all in a bunch in the cellar. <i>Bob Cratchit opens a trapdoor and calls down to presumably a horde of children.</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Merry Christmas, children! I hope you're all well and happy!	530
BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>(perhaps recorded on tape; in unison)</i> We're hungry!	
MANY VOICES:	We're hungry too!	
CHILD 1 AND CHILD 2:	Children are always so hungry, it's kind of cute. Oh, my goodness, I forgot. . . .	
BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>Bob Cratchit runs to the main door, and goes out it.</i>	535
TINY TIM:	Father has a Christmas surprise for you, Mother. <i>Bob Cratchit comes running back in with a bundle, wrapped in a blanket.</i>	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Look, darling, another foundling. I found a foundling.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	And what do you want me to do with it? Cook it for Christmas dinner in place of the goose we don't have?	540
CHILD 1 AND CHILD 2:	We're hungry. Feed us!	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	We're not cannibals yet, children. Soon, but not yet.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh what a gruesome family.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Did you hear that?	545
BOB CRATCHIT:	Hear what?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Someone said we were gruesome.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	I didn't hear anything.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Maybe I'm losing my mind. That would be a nice Christmas present.	550

GHOST:	We really should be at the Fezziwigs.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Bob Cratchit, we already have twenty other children, all of whom have to sleep in a great big pile in the cellar and rarely have enough to eat. Are you out of your mind, bringing another child into this house?	555
	<i>Bob Cratchit hands the bundle to Mrs. Bob Cratchit.</i>	
BOB CRATCHIT:	But you so love children, my darling.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Love children? Are you stupid as well as poor? <i>(to the two children on the ground)</i> Children, do I act like I like children?	
CHILD 1 AND CHILD 2:	No, Mother.	560
TINY TIM:	Indeed she does not. Mother often tears at her hair and cries out, "Oh what a wretched life I lead with twenty children."	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	And now twenty-one! <i>(stands and screams)</i> God, strike me dead now, I don't want to live.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Goodness. Why are you showing me this?	565
GHOST:	I have no idea.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Bob Cratchit, did you ask that horrible Mr. Scrooge for a raise as I told you to?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Well an amusing story about that . . . I was going to, when Mr. Scrooge called me in and told me that he was buying us all energy units of heat out of half of my existing salary.	570
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	What? Energy units of heat? And he's using HALF of your salary to buy whatever these things are? I may go mad right now. I'll go nuts, I'll go crackers.	
CHILD 1:	I want a cracker.	575
CHILD 2:	I want a cracker.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Listen to the children, they're so cute.	
GHOST:	Poor Mrs. Cratchit. She's losing her mind due to your business practices.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh poeey. If she ends up in the madhouse, that's her problem.	580
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I'm hearing voices talk about me. They say I'm ready for the madhouse. And I am too.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Oh there's not a saner woman in all of London.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	You're missing part of your brain, aren't you? Open the cellar door, would you?	585
	<i>Bob Cratchit opens the trapdoor again. Mrs. Bob Cratchit goes over to it and calls down to the children.</i>	
	Children, here's a new little brother or sister for you. Give it a name and take care of it, would you?	
	<i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit starts to toss the foundling down there, but Bob Cratchit stops her.</i>	590
BOB CRATCHIT:	Gladys, darling, what are you doing? This is an infant. You mustn't throw it down to the cellar. We must cherish it.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Oh, right, cherish it. <i>(to the foundling)</i> Hello, little child. Cherish, cherish, cherish. <i>(hands Bob Cratchit the child)</i> Here, you cherish the child awhile, would you? I think I want to go get a drink at the pub and then jump off London Bridge. <i>(calls down to the cellar)</i> Goodbye, children. Mother's going to jump off the bridge. Do as I say and not as I do. Have a nice Christmas dinner tomorrow.	600
TINY TIM:	Oh, Mummy, don't die!	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Don't tell me what to do!	
CHILD 1 AND CHILD 2:	Mummy! Mummy!	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Goodbye, everyone! I can't stand being alive one more second!	605
	<i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit rushes out of the house.</i>	

BOB CRATCHIT:	Gladys, please don't do this. It's Christmas Eve! It's a happy time.	
TINY TIM:	Where's Mummy going? How can she leave me, her little crippled child? Not to mention the new foundling, the two children sitting over there, and the remaining children in the cellar?	610
BOB CRATCHIT:	Oh what a long question that was, Tiny Tim, and I have not an answer for you. Oh it breaks my heart. I think we all better cry for your unhappy lot. On the count of three, everybody weep. One, two, three. <i>Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, and the two Children all weep.</i>	615
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	<i>(uncomfortable)</i> Oh heavens, they're crying. <i>Lights dim on the Cratchits. The Ghost and Scrooge walk to another part of the stage.</i>	620
GHOST:	That was very pathetic. If I weren't so heartless, I would've been moved. But I wasn't. And why does he keep bringing children home when they have no money? And don't you agree, Mrs. Cratchit seems in serious trouble?	625
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	I don't mean to be rigid, but we're supposed to go to the Fezziwigs FIRST, so you can be reminded of your cheerful, old boss who was so generous and full of life and showed us all the joyful side of Christmas. We're not supposed to have witnessed any of what we just saw, and I can't let it distract us.	630
GHOST:	I think I should go back to bed, and you should go back to Ghost School or something. <i>Scrooge starts to walk away.</i>	635
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Ebenezer Scrooge, you come back here. We have got to make you change your personality by the end of this evening. Now admittedly we've had trouble getting things off to a proper start, but you're not to go back to bed. Though perhaps going back to your residence might be right . . . maybe I can get my astral directions working again, and then we can move on to the Fezziwigs. They're usually quite an audience favorite, and there's no point in depressing everyone with that sour rendition of Mrs. Bob Cratchit which is nowhere to be found in Dickens.	640
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh very well. Let's walk back to my place, shall we? What an idiotic ghost. <i>The Ghost zaps Scrooge as they both exit.</i>	645
SCENE 6	<i>A pub. Various people milling around. A BARTENDER. Everyone is singing a carol. They kind of know they don't know it.</i>	
EVERYONE:	<i>(sings)</i> <i>Good King Wenceslaus looked out</i> <i>On the feast of Stephen</i> <i>As the snow lay deep about</i> <i>Duh duh duh and even</i> <i>Duh duh the moon that night</i> <i>When the wind was cru-el</i> <i>Duh duh duh duh came in sight</i> <i>Serving Christmas gru-uel . . .</i>	650 655

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	<i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit sort of explodes into the room.</i> I NEED A DRINK!	660
	<i>The Bartender gives her a shot of something, which she drinks quickly.</i>	
	Hit me again! (<i>gulps the second shot down</i>) And again! (<i>gulps the third shot down</i>) Okay. I'll let it kick in, and then I'll want directions to London Bridge.	665
GHOST:	<i>The Ghost and Scrooge suddenly arrive.</i> At last! And now—the Fezziwigs! <i>The Ghost and Scrooge look around. No Fezziwigs in sight.</i> Gosh darn it! Come on, get a move here, I demand to conjure up the FEZZIWIGS!	670
	<i>Great noise and commotion. Lights go out, and flash around. Everyone in the pub sort of scurries on- and offstage, clearly something is happening. Maybe the sounds of alarm bells ringing too.</i>	
	<i>When the lights settle back on, the set is more or less the same, except a Christmas tree has been brought on. . . . The people in the pub have put on different accents to their costumes—festive hats? Or Christmas tinsel around their necks, or something.</i>	675
	<i>And significantly—MR. AND MRS. FEZZIWIG are there. They are dressed and padded with bright orange wigs on. They are extremely cheerful and happy; they dominate the room.</i>	680
MR. AND MRS. FEZZIWIG:	MERRY CHRISTMAS, ONE AND ALL, FROM YOUR FRIENDS AND EMPLOYERS, THE FEZZIWIGS!	685
MRS. FEZZIWIG:	And God bless us, everyone!	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Tiny Tim says that!	
MRS. FEZZIWIG:	Tiny who? <i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit looks around confused. She's not sure where she is. She knows it's not quite the pub she walked into a minute ago, but she also knows she's a bit drunk, and doesn't know where she is.</i>	690
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Where am I, I wonder? Things looks different.	
MR. FEZZIWIG:	It's time to stop work, everyone. You too, Ebenezer Scrooge. Everyone get ready to drink some Christmas punch, spiked with a little Christmas cheer, and get ready to dance a merry ol' dance with our two matrimonially available daughters. <i>The two matrimonially available FEZZIWIG DAUGHTERS enter just now, and grin at everyone, very happy and very available.</i>	695 700
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Yes, it's good ol' Mr. Fezziwig. I recognize him indeed. I was his apprentice when I was a young man.	
GHOST:	Thank goodness, we finally got here! It's the past. And I am the Ghost of Christmas Past, and that's where we are. Phew!!!	705
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Where's the Christmas punch? Give me some punch!	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Aaargh! Why is she here?	
GHOST:	I don't know. She shouldn't be here. It's some glitch or other. Just pay her no attention.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Some glitch? Oh I'm hearing voices again. (<i>hits her head with her hand</i>) Shut up, shut up!	710
GHOST:	The lesson for you to learn is about how well the Fezziwigs celebrate Christmas, and how they make it fun for their employees. Can you focus on that please?	

EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Well, I'll try.	715
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I need some punch please!	
MR. FEZZIWIG:	Get this woman some punch! <i>Someone hands Mrs. Bob Cratchit a glass of punch. She gulps it.</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Mmmmm, delicious. Good. Now as soon as I'm really drunk, I want to kill myself.	720
MR. FEZZIWIG:	Ha ha ha, that's a dark bit of humor there, now now, killing oneself is for other days, not for Christmas, and not for Christmas Eve. Am I right, Mrs. Fezziwig?	
MRS. FEZZIWIG:	You're right, Mr. Fezziwig. Holidays are wonderful things. And Christmas is the most wonderful holiday of them all.	725
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Okay, I'm ready to die now. Which way to London Bridge?	
GHOST:	Now, Mrs. Cratchit, can you hear me?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, you're in my head all right.	
GHOST:	Now listen to me. You need tranquilizers. Are you on an antidepressant?	730
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	On a what?	
GHOST:	Oh that's right, I'm ahead of myself again. Well, just go home to Mr. Cratchit. I'm trying to redeem this man here and you're part of his story. If you kill yourself, the story has an entirely different meaning.	735
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Story? I don't know what you're talking about. Which way to the river?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Oh, let her kill herself, and I'll just go home to bed.	
GHOST:	No! You will not go back to bed. You are on a journey and we're going to get it right. Now I've showed you your childhood, and I've showed you the Fezziwigs. . . .	740
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	You haven't shown me my childhood.	
GHOST:	Yes, I have. Oh no, I haven't? <i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit starts to creep out.</i>	745
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	I'll find the river myself. Good night, everyone. Merry Christmas, see you in hell! (<i>exits</i>)	
MRS. FEZZIWIG:	Did she say, "See you in hell"? That's a terrible Christmas greeting.	
GHOST:	Oh God, we've got to go back and do his childhood. . . . Scrooge, hold my arm . . . we're going back, back, back . . . <i>Everyone onstage makes a woo-woo sound, the lights go strange, and we're back in time.</i>	750
SCENE 7		
	<i>Young Ebenezer and Young Jacob stand next to each other, as in the first scene. The Ghost and Scrooge watch them. No one else is onstage.</i>	755
YOUNG JACOB:	(<i>singing</i>) <i>Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn king</i>	760
YOUNG EBENEZER:	Bah! Humbug!	
GHOST:	Young Ebenezer hated Christmas from an early age.	
YOUNG EBENEZER:	It's too commercial! And it's icky and goody-goody. I hate it!	
GHOST:	Poor Ebenezer grew up in an orphanage.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	No, I didn't.	765
GHOST:	Yes, you did.	

A man and a woman, the BEADLE and the BEADLE'S WIFE, enter with a big pot and a big ladle. The Beadle holds the pot; his Wife holds the ladle.

The Beadle and his Wife are played by the same actors who played Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig, but they've taken off their orange wigs and made a few other minor costume adjustments. 770

BEADLE: Come get your porridge, you ungrateful orphan children.
BEADLE'S WIFE: So-weeeee! So-weeeeeee! Come along, little piggies! 775
The Wife ladles porridge into bowls, which Young Ebenezer and Young Jacob hold out to her.

Here's glop for you, and glop for you. Now, choke on it!
Young Ebenezer and Young Jacob mime gobbling up their oatmeal. 780

GHOST: Isn't it sad? The poor, poor children in this horrible orphanage.

BEADLE: The children should be very grateful for the food we give them, isn't that so, Mrs. Fezziwig?

BEADLE'S WIFE: My name isn't Mrs. Fezziwig.

BEADLE: No, of course, it's not. It's something else. Mrs. Cratchit? 785

BEADLE'S WIFE: No, I can't remember what my name is, but it isn't Mrs. Cratchit. Oh look, one of the young boys is coming over to us.
Young Ebenezer walks over to the Beadle and holds out his empty bowl.

YOUNG EBENEZER: Please, sir . . . I want some more. 790

BEADLE: What???

YOUNG EBENEZER: Please, sir . . . I want some . . . more?

EBENEZER SCROOGE: None of this rings a bell.

GHOST: Well it's your childhood.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: I don't remember it. 795

GHOST: Well, you've repressed it.

BEADLE'S WIFE: He wants more!! Oliver Twist, you are an ungrateful child!

EBENEZER SCROOGE: You see, she said another name. You've taken me to some other person's past, you incompetent fool.

GHOST: She didn't say Oliver Twist. She said Ebenezer Scrooge. 800

EBENEZER SCROOGE: I heard her say Oliver Twist.

BEADLE'S WIFE: Ebenezer Scrooge, you are an ungrateful child. I don't know why I said Oliver Twist. Maybe the other child is Oliver Twist.

YOUNG JACOB: No. I'm Jacob Marley.

BEADLE'S WIFE: Jacob Marley . . . I don't remember having an orphan by that name here. 805

BEADLE: I think you're Mrs. Fezziwig.

BEADLE'S WIFE: Well I'm not. You're the Beadle and I'm Mrs. Beadle.

BEADLE: If you say so.

EBENEZER SCROOGE: *(to Ghost)* I think you don't know what you're doing. 810

GHOST: Look, the point is, you were either an orphan or you weren't, but you had a tough life, it helped to make you the mean, mean man you became. Okay? Point made . . . let's not get hung up on whether all the details are exactly right or not. All right? 815

EBENEZER SCROOGE: I think you're incompetent.

GHOST: Well I think you're mean and stingy and a terrible person.
(zaps him with the zapper)

EBENEZER SCROOGE: Aaaaaaaaagggghhhh!

GHOST: And now that's the end of my tenure as the Ghost of Christmas Past. You go back to sleep for a while, and the Ghost of Christmas Present will show up shortly. 820

BEADLE:	And where do we go?	
GHOST:	You go to the kitchen, to wash out that disgusting pot.	
BEADLE:	All right.	825
BEADLE'S WIFE:	Let's make the children wash the pot! And scrub the floor too!	
YOUNG EBENEZER:	I don't want to scrub the floor!	
BEADLE'S WIFE:	Oliver Twist, you're a lazy bum. You'll be fired from your first job.	830
YOUNG EBENEZER:	Not if I'm self-employed I won't be.	
BEADLE'S WIFE:	Shut up! <i>The Beadle and his Wife exit, followed by Young Ebenezer and Young Jacob.</i>	
GHOST:	Minions of the night, send Mr. Scrooge back to sleep. <i>Ghost exits. Lights, music. A couple of "MINIONS OF THE NIGHT"—or townsfolk—help with the set change and move Scrooge back to his "home." Scrooge's chair comes back. The minions push Scrooge to it, and he sits in it. If you like, the minions can be stagehands, dressed in their normal clothes.</i>	835
MINIONS OF THE NIGHT:	One o'clock, one o'clock, one forty-five. Scrooge is sleepy, Scrooge is sleepy. <i>Note: "One o'clock, one o'clock" is in rhythm of "patty cake, patty cake."</i>	840
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Why yes, I believe I am. (<i>falls asleep abruptly</i>)	
MINIONS OF THE NIGHT:	Sleep in your chair. We don't have a set for the bed. Fall back asleep. <i>The minions exit.</i>	845
SCENE 8		850
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	<i>Scrooge back in his chair. He nods asleep. The clock strikes two. He awakens abruptly.</i> Two dings from the clock. That means two A.M. and a second spirit. But here I am in my chair, and all is well. I'm just having bad dreams, clearly. All that stuff about Jacob Marley and the Ghost of Christmas Past. It's just a dream. <i>Enter the Ghost again. Lights, magic music.</i> <i>The Ghost is now out of her UPS costume. She is in some big robe, with a garland of Christmas-y greens on her head. She also has a pretty fake-looking beard on.</i> <i>She's now the Ghost of Christmas Present; and in movies that figure is often presented as a jolly, bearded man with a fancy robe.</i>	855
GHOST:	Ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present!	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	For crying out loud! I've had enough of this.	860
GHOST:	Ebenezer Scrooge, you are being given this opportunity to improve yourself.	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	All right, all right. Why do you have a beard now?	
GHOST:	I don't know, I'm Father Christmas. <i>The Ghost takes off the beard, a bit annoyed with it.</i>	865
		870

SCENE 9

The Cratchit house arrives back. Still the table with three legs. There is a pathetic Christmas tree—tiny, few limbs, with three Christmas balls hung on it and a few strands of tinsel on one branch.

875

Bob Cratchit is singing a carol with the children—Tiny Tim, and Child 1 and Child 2. It's "Silent Night." They are singing it at a normal, slightly slow tempo.

BOB CRATCHIT AND CHILDREN: *(singing)*

Silent night, holy night

880

All is calm

[continues . . .]

EBENEZER SCROOGE: *(spoken, during the singing above)* Oh please, make them stop that.

GHOST: It's a beloved Christmas song.

885

EBENEZER SCROOGE: *(during the last notes, clutches his ears and calls out)* Make it end, make it end!

The song finishes.

Oh thank God.

BOB CRATCHIT: Shall we sing it again, children?

890

CHILDREN: Oh yes, Father!

EBENEZER SCROOGE: NOOOOOOOOOOO!

Scrooge rushes at Bob Cratchit and knocks him off his chair to the ground.

GHOST: Mr. Scrooge!

895

TINY TIM: Father, are you all right?

BOB CRATCHIT: Yes. Something pushed me out of my chair, that's all.

TINY TIM: I hope you're not going to be crippled like me.

BOB CRATCHIT: That's sweet of you to worry, Tiny Tim. You're a sensitive child.

TINY TIM: If we were both crippled, people might not know which one of us to feel sorry for.

900

CHILD 1: Well, then they could feel sorry for both of you.

TINY TIM: That's true. But they might go into sympathetic overdrive, and then start to avoid us.

BOB CRATCHIT: Well, Tiny Tim, it's sweet of you to obsess about it, but really I'm not crippled, I just fell down and went bump.

905

CHILDREN: *(delighted)* Bump! Bump!

Enter LITTLE NELL. She is a big girl—either tall and big or even heavy. She carries a large bag in which she hides some gifts, we will find out.

910

She's sensitive, like Tiny Tim. But also has a bit of a hale and hearty, "look on the bright side" attitude. So she has energy.

LITTLE NELL: Hello, Father. Hello, Tiny Tim. Hello, other two children.

BOB CRATCHIT: Look, children, it's your older sister Little Nell, home from the sweatshop. Did you bring home your pitiful salary to help us pay the bills?

915

LITTLE NELL: I was going to, dearest Father, but then on the street I saw such a pathetic sight. A woman of indeterminate age, shivering in the cold and clutching her starving children. They were weeping and rending their garments. And because it's Christmastime, I felt such a tender feeling in my heart that I just had to give all my salary to them.

920

BOB CRATCHIT: That's lovely to hear, Little Nell. Children, your sister gives us all a good example.

LITTLE NELL:	But I had saved enough money from before, with my nighttime job of selling matches in the snow, that I've been able to buy everyone presents.	925
TINY TIM:	Presents, presents! Oh my little heart may burst!	
GHOST:	You see how happy and touching they are?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	If you say so. Just promise me they won't sing "Silent Night" again.	930
LITTLE NELL:	Would anyone like to sing "Silent Night" with me?	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	NOOOOOOOO!!!! <i>Scrooge rushes at Little Nell and pushes her off her stool. She falls to the ground.</i>	935
LITTLE NELL:	Aaaaaaaaaaggghhh! What was that???	
GHOST:	Mr. Scrooge, stop that!	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Just a very strong wind in here, darling Little Nell. I like your sweater, is it new?	
LITTLE NELL:	Yes, Father. I made it myself at the sweatshop from extra yarn and table scraps that fell on the floor. It's my little gift to myself to keep my spirits up.	940
BOB CRATCHIT:	Well it's even nicer than your earlier sweater that your mother made a stew out of. (<i>suddenly realizing, worried</i>) Children, where is your mother?	945
TINY TIM:	I don't know, Father. We haven't seen her for several hours since she said she was going to jump off the London Bridge.	
LITTLE NELL:	Oh my gracious.	
CHILD 1 AND CHILD 2:	Mummy, Mummy! We want Mummy!	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Come, children, let us pray for the safe return of Mrs. Cratchit.	950
TINY TIM:	What if she's dead? Think how pathetic I'll be then!	
GHOST:	I can't have Mrs. Cratchit be dead. Wait, I'm going to need all my powers. <i>The Ghost spreads her arms, with firm authority. Bright light hits her and she intones.</i>	955
	Hear me, spirits and ghosts around us. By all the powers vested in me from heaven and above, I call upon the forces of the wind and sea to bring Mrs. Bob Cratchit back to her proper home right now!	
	<i>Sounds of wind; then nothing.</i>	960
	<i>Mrs. Bob Cratchit, her clothes and hair looking wet, comes dancing into the room.</i>	
	<i>She suddenly sees where she is and screams.</i>	
	Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaggghhh!!!!	
GHOST:	It worked!	965
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	NO NO NO!	
CHILDREN:	Mummy! Mummy!	
TINY TIM:	Merry Christmas, Mother. And God bless us, everyone.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	No, I don't want to be here.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Gladys, are you all right?	970
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Wait a minute. <i>She struggles inside her bodice; something is moving around that is bothering her.</i>	
	Uh . . . uh . . . got it!	
	<i>From inside her bodice she brings out a big fish.</i>	975
	Look, children, straight from the filthy, stinking Thames River. Mother's brought home a fish. How'd you all like fish for Christmas dinner?	

TINY TIM:	No thank you very much. I would prefer a Christmas goose and huckleberries and candied yams and then Mother's special Christmas pudding.	980
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Well you're gonna eat sushi and like it. Here, start nibbling on it now! <i>She hands him the fish.</i>	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Spirit, why did you bring this woman back? She clearly was happier at the bottom of the river.	985
GHOST:	Mr. and Mrs. Cratchit are part of the story. They're very poor and they're BOTH very sweet. Now from now on, Mrs. Cratchit will behave correctly. <i>The Ghost waves her hand toward Mrs. Bob Cratchit, as if she has power to change her.</i>	990
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	(<i>sweetly</i>) Hello, children. Hello, Bob. Hello, Tiny Tim. Mother's home now, Merry Christmas.	
LITTLE NELL:	Oh look, Mother is her old self again.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	(<i>sweetly</i>) That's right, Little Nell. (<i>suddenly looks at Little Nell</i>) What's that hideous thing you're wearing?	995
GHOST:	Oh dear. Something's wrong with Mrs. Cratchit again. <i>The Ghost waves her hand again at Mrs. Bob Cratchit, but Mrs. Bob Cratchit brushes it away like a mosquito.</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Little Nell, you stupid child, I've asked you a question.	1000
LITTLE NELL:	It's a new sweater I knitted for myself at the sweatshop.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	You're so awful-looking. Haven't I told you repeatedly you look like a bowl of porridge?	
LITTLE NELL:	When you're the bad mommy you say that. But when you're the good mommy, you stroke my hair and say, "There, there, Little Nell, who cares if you're homely as long as your heart is pure."	1005
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Well I'm the bad mommy now. YOU LOOK LIKE A BOWL OF OATMEAL! No one will ever marry you . . . or if you did find some sorry soul, he'd pour milk on you, sprinkle sugar on your head, and eat your face for breakfast. <i>Little Nell cries.</i>	1010
BOB CRATCHIT:	Darling, must you continually tell Little Nell she looks like a bowl of oatmeal? She may not be the prettiest flower in the garden, but there's no need to rub her face in it.	1015
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	And why is she called Little Nell? She's enormous.	
LITTLE NELL:	Okay, well excuse me for living then. Why don't I just crawl into the gutter and die?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Finally, a constructive suggestion!	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	I like Mrs. Cratchit. Is that what I'm supposed to get from seeing this?	1020
GHOST:	No it isn't.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Did anyone hear a voice?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Your mother is hearing voices, children. We should say a prayer.	1025
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	(<i>somewhat touched</i>) I heard a voice saying they liked me. Gosh, I haven't heard anyone say they liked me in a long time. Ever, actually.	
TINY TIM:	I like you, Mother. I love you.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Oh shut up. You're just hungry. <i>Tiny Tim, Little Nell, and the two other children weep and cry.</i>	1030
TINY TIM:	Mummy, isn't it time for Christmas dinner? For the Christmas goose and the huckleberries and the candied yams and then the Christmas pudding?	

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Children, I've been out drinking and trying to drown myself in the Thames—you think I have time to be cooking for you???	1035
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	When will feminism be invented so people won't just assume I'll be cooking all the time, and be positive and pleasant. I wish this were 1977, then I'd be admired for my unpleasantness!	
GHOST:	1977 sounds interesting. I wonder if they'd like me there too?	1040
	The two of you are impossible. I don't know how to make you learn the lesson of Christmas.	
	<i>The Ghost zaps Scrooge.</i>	
EBENEZER SCROOGE:	Aaaaaaaaggggh!	
	<i>The Ghost zaps Mrs. Bob Cratchit.</i>	1045
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Aaaaaaaagggghhh! (<i>looks around accusingly at everyone</i>)	
	Who did that? Who did that?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Did what, darling?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Somebody did something to my arm.	
TINY TIM:	So am I to assume there is no Christmas dinner?	1050
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, that's what you're to "assume." Why does he talk this way? Is he a British child?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, darling, we're all British.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Really? I feel like I'm from Cleveland, Ohio. Well, never mind.	
	No, Tiny Tim, there's no dinner. We can eat the dust on the floor.	1055
	<i>Child 2 stands, proud to make an announcement.</i>	
CHILD 2:	Mummy, Daddy, Tiny Tim. I have a surprise. While Mummy was in the river, I was in the kitchen—and I cooked the dinner.	
THE OTHER CHILDREN:	Ooooooooooh!!! Christmas dinner!	1060
BOB CRATCHIT:	Child Number Two, you're so good. Gladys, maybe it's time we gave him a name.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Okay. (<i>names him:</i>) Martha.	
CHILD 2:	But I'm a boy.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Okay. Marthum.	1065
CHILD 2:	Marthum?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	It's all right, dear, your mother's difficult, just be glad she called you anything.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	That's right. I'm very difficult. But then life is difficult.	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Gladys, darling. Please look on the bright side once in a while. Our lovely child Marthum has cooked us Christmas dinner. Isn't that nice? Isn't that worth being happy about?	1070
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	(<i>thinks; wants to be negative, but can't think how to spin it bad</i>) Yes, but . . .	
BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, but what, darling?	1075
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, but . . . well, I suppose I could be glad about it. It is very nice we can have Christmas dinner, and I didn't have to make it. (<i>warning</i>) Although I don't want to do dishes afterward.	
TINY TIM:	I'll do the dishes, precious Mummy.	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	You always drop the dishes. Although it makes me laugh when you do.	1080
BOB CRATCHIT:	Yes, Tiny Tim's so awkward, sometimes it's fun to laugh at him. I mean, with him.	
	<i>Tiny Tim smiles happily.</i>	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	All right. I admit it. I'm feeling better. Marthum, thank you for cooking, now perhaps you could go and get the dinner.	1085
CHILD 2:	Can't we sing a song about dinner first?	
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT:	What's all this singing all the time?	
BOB CRATCHIT:	It's Christmas, darling. There are carols and hymns and original songs written directly for us, like this next one.	1090

MRS. BOB CRATCHIT: Well all right. I can be in a good mood occasionally.

BOB CRATCHIT: And then after the song, a short intermission so we can use the loo, and then delicious Christmas dinner right after the interval.

Bob Cratchit, Mrs. Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, Little Nell, and the two other children all sing "The Christmas Dinner Song." It's cheerful and hearty, like a German drinking song. 1095

The Ghost prods Scrooge and makes him sing as well. So this next section is sung by everyone, the Ghost and Scrooge as well. Mrs. Bob Cratchit can play she hears additional voices if she wants—though that may be too busy to work. 1100

EVERYONE: (singing)

Gulp, gorge

Be gluttonous too

Each swallow you take 1105

Each mouthful you chew

Swig, swill

And drink lots of beer

Get drunk and fall down

It's Christmas, my dear 1110

Yum, yum, yum, yum

We're covered with gravy and cranberry juice

Too good to eat slowly, so that's our excuse

The berries and pudding, the yams and the goose!

Yum yum! 1115

The song ends triumphantly.

End Act 1.

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