

(to the audience) I woke up in the middle of an extremely loud snore, and sitting upright in bed to gather my thoughts, the bell struck one o'clock again. I began wondering which of my curtains this new ghost would suddenly spring from, so I pushed them all aside with my own hands, lay down again, and kept a sharp lookout all around the bed. You see, I wanted to confront the Spirit the moment it appeared, and didn't want to be caught off guard and made nervous. But I was by no means prepared for nothing; and consequently, when the bell struck one and no apparition showed up, I was struck by a violent bout of trembling. Eventually, after what seemed an interminable amount of time, a voice called out.

(Christmas Present enters the scene)

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Come here! Come here! and get to know me better, man!

(Scrooge greets Christmas Present with a timid bow)

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the likes of me before!

SCROOGE

Never!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Have you never walked forth with the younger members of my family?

SCROOGE

I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

More than eighteen hundred.

SCROOGE

A tremendous family to provide for! Spirit, take me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learned a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have lessons to teach me, let me profit from it.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Touch my robe!

SCROOGE

(to the audience) I did as I was told, and held it fast. The room vanished instantly, and suddenly we stood in the city streets on Christmas morning.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

There are some upon this earth of yours, who lay claim to know the Christmas spirit, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.

SCROOGE

(to the audience) And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, that led him straight to my clerk's home; And in came Bob Cratchit, and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Sadly, for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

And how did little Tim behave? asked Mrs. Cratchit.

SCROOGE

"As good as gold," said Bob, "Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see."

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

And then a Merry Christmas was wished to all, by Bob Cratchit. Which all the family echoed.

SCROOGE

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim. Look spirit, how he sits very close to his father's side upon his little stool. And how Bob holds his withered little hand in his, as if he wished to keep him by his side, dreading that he might be taken from him. Tell me Spirit, will Tiny Tim live?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

I see a vacant seat, in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

SCROOGE

Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race, will find him here. What then? If he is destined to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

SCROOGE

You mock me with my own words, Spirit.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

And you mock yourself as you speak them. My life upon this globe, is very brief, It ends to-night.

SCROOGE

To-night!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.

SCROOGE

Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask, but I see something strange, protruding over there. Is it a foot or a claw?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it. Look here.

(CP motions with their hands as if magically revealing an image)

CHRISTMAS PRESENT (cont.)

Old man! look there. Look, look, down there! *(CP motions toward an area off stage)*

SCROOGE

The table skirt was pulled back to reveal a boy and a girl. Sickly, thin, dressed in rags, and scowling with a wild look; but also completely humble. Are they yours, Spirit?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

They are Man's, and they haunt me, appealing from their fathers. That boy is Ignorance. That girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see written, that which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.

SCROOGE

Have they no refuge or resource?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

(CP exits)

SCROOGE

(to the audience) Again he mocked me with my own words. And then the bell struck twelve. I looked about myself for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, I remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, Come, quickly there is no time to be lost!

(Scrooge leads the group to the next scene)