

SCROOGE

The bell struck twelve. I looked about myself for the Ghost, and saw it not. But then I heard a sound and when I turned a Phantom approached. (Death enters. Scrooge drops to his knees) When it came near me, I bent down upon my knee. (he cowers before the spirit) The great Spirit reached out a skeletal finger toward me in such a frightening way that I turned myself away from his frightful visage. (Scrooge turns away from The Spirit of Christmas Future (TSOCF))

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Ahem (clears throat, Scrooge refuses to look at him and actually crawls away from him)

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

AHEM! (Louder)...(When Scrooge refuses to cooperate, TSOCF speaks) This really only works if you're looking at me.

SCROOGE

What's that?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

You're not cooperating. You're supposed to look at me. I shouldn't be speaking right now.

SCROOGE

(Scrooge stands and faces TSOCF) How were you intending on communicating with me if you weren't planning on speaking?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

I usually just point. It's all very ominous and dramatic.

SCROOGE

Seems highly ineffective.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Can we get on with it?

SCROOGE

Very well. If you insist. Shall I cower again?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

You know what, you've kinda ruined it already.

SCROOGE

(back in character) A thousand pardons oh great Spirit. What message do you bring?

(TSOCF pulls himself together and then dramatically gestures at Scrooge)

SCROOGE (continued)

Oh...you're sticking with the pointing thing. Really?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Okay fine. Just stand over there, okay? (Scrooge positions himself appropriately)

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Ebenezer Scrooge, I have come for you!

SCROOGE

Am I in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Yes! Come, I will show you shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us.

SCROOGE

Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any specter I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear your company, and do it with a thankful heart. (to audience) Suddenly there we were, in the heart of it; at the stock exchange, just as I had witnessed many times before. The Spirit paused beside a small cluster of businessmen. Noting that its hand was gesturing toward them, I moved closer to eavesdrop on their conversation.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Take heed Ebenezer Scrooge! The first man claims to not know much about the deceased either way, other than to know that he is dead. He apparently passed on the Eve of Christmas. And the second man declares that God only knows, that he thought the old miser would never die. It's likely to be a cheap funeral, for upon his life he doesn't know of anybody who's likely to attend the funeral.

SCROOGE

I am quite capable of hearing the conversation on my own Spirit. You do not have to repeat what they say.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

It is my purpose to ensure that you hear what is being said and that you understand...

SCROOGE

But still, it seems a little unnecess...

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Look, it's just the way things are done. So get over it.

SCROOGE

Very well, if you insist...Who is this pauper? They could scarcely be speaking on the death of my partner Jacob Marley, for that was Past, and your province is the Future.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Ebenezer Scrooge, I have come for you.

SCROOGE

W-what do you mean? I'm not ready to die yet!

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

{Death's bony finger pointed to a nearby grave stone} That is where you will be if you do not change your ways, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

(to audience) My eyes followed his gesture, and I saw my own name etched upon a cheap wooden headstone, along with the date of this very Christmas Day. (He lets out a cry of disbelief and falls to his knees.) I-I don't understand. I've been a successful businessman. I have wealth and power. Why would death come for me in my most productive years?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Your wealth and power mean nothing to me, Ebenezer. It is your actions that determine your fate. And yours, my dear fellow, have been less than admirable.

SCROOGE

(to audience) I hung my head, knowing that the spirit was right. I had spent my life hoarding my wealth and neglecting those in need, including my own family. But now, faced with the reality of my impending death, I felt a sense of regret and remorse. Please, Spirit, have mercy on me. I promise to change my ways. I'll be kind and generous. I'll make amends for all the wrongs I've done.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

The way is clear, Ebenezer. You must make amends for the life you have wasted if you wish to alter this future.

SCROOGE

Answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead. But if the courses are departed from, the ends will change.

SCROOGE

(Christmas Future exits while Scrooge speaks these lines) Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this experience. I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

So you'll let your employee Bob Cratchit put sufficient coal in the furnace to warm his weary bones.

SCROOGE

Uh...extra coal you say?

(TSOCF spins and points to the gravestone)

SCROOGE

Alright, alright. Sufficient coal for the furnace, what else?

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

You'll join you nephew for Christmas dinner and charades?

SCROOGE

Charades? Really? They're all so bad at it...

(TSOCF spins and points to the gravestone)

SCROOGE

(resigned to his fate) Very well. Nephew, dinner and charades. What else.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

I don't think I really need to go through it all, do I? You just need to start being a better human being okay? You're going to buy the fattest goose you can find for the Cratchit family. You're going to provide good wages and a comprehensive health plan for your employee Bob Cratchit and his family so Tiny Tim is cured and lives a long happy life. And you'll routinely provide funds to the poor and destitute. That's not so hard is it?

SCROOGE

Well...

CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Now what?

SCROOGE

It just seems like an awful lot to adjust to all at once. Don't you have something more transitional. You know, a little at a time. Perhaps we could deal with the coal issue this year and then next year my nephew's party and then the year after that...

(TSOCF spins and points to the gravestone)

SCROOGE

Okay, okay. Let's see, where was I? Oh that's right...(Scrooge drops to his knees once again) Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this experience. I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. (frustrated Spirit exits during this line)

(looking up at the audience)

I waited for a response and when I did not receive one, I looked up to find that the spirit had vanished!

(Scrooge stands)

Hurry now! Follow me! We've one more visit to pay if I am to alter the course of my destiny!