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Resolutions

CAST of CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Name	Description
Nigel Crenshaw	A Victorian businessman
Henry Braddock	Crenshaw's clerk
Peter Cratchit	Bob and Charlotte Cratchit's son, about 20 years old
Ebenezer Scrooge	A Victorian businessman
Andy	A boy, about 12, leader of a gang of street urchins
Spirit	The memory of the past Christmas Eve
Constable Bailey	A Victorian Bobby
Bob Cratchit	Scrooge's clerk
Charlotte Cratchit	Bob's wife
William Cratchit	Their 9-year-old son
Belinda Cratchit	Their 11-year-old Daughter
Martha Cratchit	Their 18-year-old Daughter
Tim Cratchit	Their 5-year-old son
Nell Watson	Peter's fiancée
Isabel Watson	Nell's mother
Amelia	Andy's little sister, about 8
Jen	An urchin
Connor	An urchin
Liz	An urchin
Tucker	An urchin

An ensemble of 8-10, who play MR. HIGGINS, Men and Women, etc. The urchins should seem to be between 6 and 10 years old.

Dialect Note: Ideally, some of the characters (Constable Bailey, some of the ensemble members with lines, urchins) should speak with a cockney accent; others should use an English accent that implies a middle-class education. No one in this story is university educated, so the extreme upper-class English accent is "right out".

Music: Recordings of the music for RESOLUTIONS can be heard at the show's website: www.ResolutionsAChristmasMusical.com under the "Music" tab. There have been a few minor changes to the lyrics since these recordings were made in May, 2015. Where there is a difference, this script is the most current version.

Act I

Scene 1:	A London street, January, 1844	1
Scene 2:	The home of Bob Cratchit, February 1844	9
Scene 3:	A London street, later that same evening	17
Scene 4:	The Office of Crenshaw Enterprises, June, 1844	18
Scene 5:	The Office of Scrooge & Marley, August, 1844	27
Scene 6:	A London street, later the same day	33
Scene 7:	Mrs. Watson's parlor, later the same day	42
Scene 8:	The Office of Scrooge & Marley, December, 1844	48
Scene 9:	The Office of Scrooge & Marley, later the same day	52

Act II

Scene 1:	A London street, the next day	61
Scene 2:	Scrooge's Office & Mrs. Watson's Parlor, later that day	69
Scene 3:	Mrs. Watson's parlor,	77
Scene 4:	A London street, later that day	82
Scene 5:	Mrs. Watson's parlor, Christmas Eve, 1844	91

Musical Synopsis

Act I

1. (Surely) There Never Was Such A Week	Ensemble
2. Resolutions	Scrooge & Bob Cratchit
3. My Sweetheart	Charlotte, Martha, Belinda Cratchit
4. What Are Dreams	Nell Watson & Peter Cratchit
5. Let's Enjoy Ourselves	Braddock & Crenshaw
6. Passing It On	Scrooge & Bob Cratchit
7. Summer Day	Ensemble
8. Afternoon Tea	Andy, Amelia & Urchins
9. Everyone Deserves A Second Chance	Isabel Watson, Andy & Amelia
10. Everyone Deserves A Second Chance (Reprise)	Isabel Watson, Andy, Amelia & Urchins
11. You Are An Example To Us All	Crenshaw
12. You Are An Example To Us All (Reprise)	Crenshaw
13. Act One Finale	Spirit, Crenshaw & Scrooge

Act II

14. Christmas Fair Madrigal	Ensemble
15. A Beautiful Wedding	Urchins and Cratchit Children
16. You Will Always Hold My Heart	Peter Cratchit & Nell Watson
17. The House On Threadneedle Street	Andy, Tim and Amelia
18. Resolutions (Reprise)	Scrooge
19. I Can't Believe It's You	Scrooge & Isabel Watson
20. Scrooge's Stooges	Ensemble
21. Passing It On (Reprise)	Scrooge, Cratchit, Nell, Peter
22. For Christmas Forever	Spirit
23. Act II Finale	Ensemble

Note on SPIRIT:

SPIRIT is a non-gendered, non-age-specific character. For these notes, I'll use feminine pronouns. Her appearances can be staged in any way that underscores the fact that, until the last scene, she is Scrooge's memory of last Christmas Eve. The things she says in the earlier scenes are quotes from "A Christmas Carol". Scrooge remembers these words, and they help him. He doesn't look around to see who's talking – he's remembering, not hearing voices. Every time Spirit appears, we should hear her musical signature before she speaks and, ideally, she should have her own special lighting effect. In the last scene, she appears to Scrooge, just as Marley and the Christmas Spirits did in "A Christmas Carol".

Some possible approaches to Spirit's earlier appearances are:

1. Have the character, costumed as a townspeople, be a part of any scene in which she has a line. This only works if your set enables her to walk past a window outside Scrooge's office in Act I, Scene 5 and Act I, Scene 8, but it is my preferred option.
2. Establish a space on-stage that belongs to Spirit, for example, a chair where she sits throughout the play, reading "A Christmas Carol" and quoting from it as her lines come up in the performance. Here, she would again be costumed in period.
3. Have her costumed fantastically, and move on and off stage at will, letting the audience know from the very beginning of the play that she is a parallel character to Marley and the other Spirits.
4. Use a voiceover technique, and have her appear onstage only in the last scene.
5. Your own, genius solution to the challenge of making her a memory, then a character.

In any approach to this challenge, you may elect to freeze the scene every time Spirit speaks. The scene must freeze in Act II, Scene 5 as indicated in the script.

ACT I
Scene I

Lights up on a crowded London street scene, Scrooge & Marley's office exterior is on one side of the street. A band of street urchins moves in and out of the crowd, jostling people and picking pockets, stealing things out of market baskets, etc.

SONG 1: THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A WEEK

WOMAN 1

FIRST HE SENT THE TURKEY OVER,
A STUPENDOUS SIZE IT WAS

WOMAN 2

WENT TO CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS MORNING
SETTING ALL THE TOWN A-BUZZ

WOMAN 3

HE TOLD ME I LOOKED LOVELY AND BROUGHT
ROSES TO MY CHEEK

ALL

SURELY, THERE WAS NEVER SUCH A WEEK!

ENSEMBLE

OH, THE WEEK RIGHT AFTER CHRISTMAS
IS USUALLY DULL AS BREAD AND CHEESE
ALL THE FEASTING'S DONE, THE PRESENTS OPENED
WEATHER'S IN A FREEZE
ONLY THIS YEAR SOMETHING'S DIFF'RENT
AND EXCITEMENT'S AT A PEAK
SURELY, THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A WEEK!

WOMAN 1

My sister lives in the same street as the Fezziwigs, and she says he called there on Boxing Day, with a shocking big bag of gifts and treats.

WOMAN 2

And I saw him just yesterday with my own eyes, strutting down Piccadilly, holding onto the hand of some nipper, walked with a crutch.

WOMAN 3

That would be young Tim Cratchit. Poor little angel, he never complains, but his Mum says he hurts all the time. *(Andy, a street urchin, lifts a loaf of bread from her basket and runs off)*

WOMAN 4

WELL, MY SISTER'S COUSIN'S NIECE IS
SCROOGE'S NEPHEW'S PARLOR MAID
AND SHE TOLD ME THAT HE CAME AND STAYED
TO DINNER, THEN HE PLAYED
GAMES LIKE BLIND MAN'S BLUFF AND THEN
CHARADES AND HIDE AND SEEK

ALL FOUR WOMEN

SURELY, THERE WAS NEVER SUCH A WEEK!

ENSEMBLE

OH, THE MEAN OLD MISER WE ONCE KNEW
HAS GONE AND CHANGED HIS ATTITUDE
HE'S BEEN CHARMING, HE'S BEEN SOCIABLE
WE THINK HE'S COME UNGLUED
BUT WE HOPE THE CHANGE IS PERMANENT,
YES, FOREVER'S WHAT WE SEEK
SURELY, THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A WEEK!

MAN 1

...and when I met him on the street on Christmas Day, he greeted me like a long-lost brother,
and then – he apologized!!

MAN 2

You're never serious!

MAN 1

Apologized for his rudeness on Christmas Eve, and subscribed (*whispers an amount in his companion's ear*) to the Christmas Fund. Then he asks me, "what else can he do?" to help our society in its good work.

MAN 2

My word - when he practically threw us out of his office last week!

They move off, still chatting

CRENSHAW

Interesting, Braddock. If our good friend, Ebenezer, has indeed seen the light, perhaps it may make him easier to deal with in the future.

BRADDOCK

But, Mr. Crenshaw, sir, you don't do any business with Scrooge – he's your main competition.

CRENSHAW

Precisely. And a softhearted rival is far easier to – deal with...

WOMAN 1

AND HIS TAILOR SAYS HE'S ORDERED BRIGHTER
VESTS OF FINE BROCADE

WOMAN 2

BOUGHT NEW CURTAINS FOR HIS ROOM BECAUSE THE
OLD ONES WERE QUITE FRAYED

WOMAN 3

CAULKED THE WINDOWS IN HIS OFFICE –
AND HE'S PLUGGED UP EVERY LEAK

ALL

SURELY, THERE WAS NEVER SUCH A WEEK!

ENSEMBLE

OH, THE DOING'S DOWN AT SCROOGE AND MARLEY
REALLY WARM THE SOUL
HE'S BEEN RAISING CRATCHIT'S SALARY AND PILING
ON THE COAL
AND THIS BRAND NEW EBENEZER
MAKES THE OLD ONE LOOK QUITE BLEAK
SURELY, THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A WEEK!

*PETER CRATCHIT and two FRIENDS walk past
Crenshaw and Braddock.*

FRIEND 1

Peter, is it true that old Scrooge increased your father's wages?

FRIEND 2

I heard he doubled them!

PETER

Yes. He's finally paying my Dad what's he's worth.

FRIEND 1

That's certainly a change for him! He used to be the biggest cheapskate in London!

FRIEND 2

Shows that a tiger can change his stripes after all, I guess.

PETER

Not likely! My Dad says he had some crazy dream last week, about no one remembering him after he dies. All these changes everyone's so excited about are just because he wants to be remembered kindly.

FRIEND 1

Likely to work, don't you think?

PETER

He dreamed something about our Tim not...being around...anymore, too, but Dad says not to tell Mum that part. Doesn't matter. He'll go back to his old ways, mark my words.

They move off.

CRENSHAW

So Scrooge is afraid of being forgotten, like Marley.

BRADDOCK

Marley was a sharp dealer, that's for sure. There were no tears shed when he passed, not even by Scrooge.

CRENSHAW

But it seems the surviving partner has had a change of heart. And developing an affection for the crippled Cratchit boy. Generosity and fear – a potentially useful combination, Henry.

ENSEMBLE

OH, THE WEEK RIGHT AFTER CHRISTMAS
IS USUALLY DULL AS BREAD AND CHEESE
ALL THE FEASTING'S DONE, THE PRESENTS OPENED
WEATHER'S IN A FREEZE
ONLY THIS YEAR SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT
AND EXCITEMENT'S AT A PEAK
SURELY THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A WEEK
SURELY, THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A WEEK!

As the song ends, EBENEZER SCROOGE enters. He moves through the crowd, greeting people as he makes his way toward his office.

SCROOGE

Good morning, good morning! And happy new year to you all!

ANDY sneaks up behind him and tries to pick his pocket

SCROOGE (*cont.*)

Here, you young rascal, Stop that! (*Scrooge grabs Andy*) I've got you now!

ANDY

Lemme go! Lemme go!

SCROOGE

Not likely, I assure you. Constable! Ho there, Constable!

ANDY

Oh please, sir, don't hand me over to the law. They'll put me in the workhouse! I'll never prig nothing ever again, please, I promise, hand to me heart!

SCROOGE

Constable!

ANDY

And me little sister Melie'll starve to death. Oh, sir, you couldn't be so cruel as that!

SCROOGE

Con-

SPIRIT

"Mankind was my business. Charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence were all my business."

SCROOGE

Eh? What? (*Realizes what he's remembered*) Marley's words! Charity, mercy...I almost forgot already!

A CONSTABLE enters, blowing his whistle.

CONSTABLE

What seems to be the trouble here, Mr. Scrooge. Well, if it isn't young Andy. Caught you at last have we? Don't worry, Mr. Scrooge – The Law will take care of this good-for-nobody.

SCROOGE switches his grip from holding onto ANDY's arm to wrapping his arm around his shoulders.

SCROOGE

No need, Constable. Just a little misunderstanding between me and my young friend here.

CONSTABLE

Your friend!! He's no friend of anybody, always excepting the rag-tag bunch of petty thieves he lives with, sir. Let me take him in and make an example of him.

SCROOGE (*thinking fast*)

No, that wouldn't be fair at all. We were just discussing an errand...er... and he thought I told him to take the money from my purse here, when I meant for him to get money from the cashbox. Isn't that right, my boy?

ANDY (*also thinking fast*)

Right, Gov'nor. That's just what happened.

SCROOGE

So you see, Constable, there was no criminal act committed here.

CONSTABLE (*confused, but agreeable*)

All right Mr. Scrooge. I'll be going along now, (*to Andy*) but I'll have me eye on you.

He moves off into the crowd, which disperses gradually over the next several lines. Some of them have been aware of Scrooge's actions.

ANDY

Thanks a lot, Gov'nor. I'll be moving on now. And since you stood up for me to the Bobby, I'll tell me chums to stay away from your purse.

SCROOGE

Just a moment, my new young friend! Let's give you something honest to do today. Go down to the pub and order a dinner – no, two dinners. You can bring them to Scrooge and Marley at 1 o'clock sharp. Tell the publican I want two pints of his best ale, shepherd's pie and baked apples. Have him put it on my account.

ANDY

Sounds bloomin' delicious, Gov'nor.

SCROOGE

Does it now? And you're nothing but skin and bones are you? Make it three dinners – ginger beer for you, my boy – and you can join me and my clerk for dinner today. There'll be sixpence for you as well – fee for services rendered.

ANDY

Wot?

SCROOGE

You do something for me, and I pay you for your services.

ANDY

And just how do I know you'll be paying me proper?

SCROOGE

A good, businesslike question. You've a head on you, boy. What's your name again?

ANDY

Andy.

SCROOGE

Andrew? Andrew what?

ANDY

Dunno. Got no other name. And it's Andy. Just Andy.

SCROOGE

All right, Andy, here's thruppence on account. You'll get the rest when you deliver the lunches.

ANDY (*starting off*)

Cheery-by, Gov'nor. I'm off to the pub now.

SCROOGE

Andrew.

ANDY

I told you, it's Andy, Gov'nor.

SCROOGE

Yes, yes. So sorry. "Andy".

ANDY

Wot?

SCROOGE

You know, you could just take the thruppence and disappear.

ANDY

(*all innocence*)

Gov'nor! As if I would!

SCROOGE

Why not try it my way this time? Prove you're trustworthy, and I may use your services often in the future. You could buy good food for your sister with money honestly earned.

ANDY

(*Suspicious, but clearly intrigued*)

Three pies, two ales and a ginger beer, three baked apples – have I got it right then?

SCROOGE

Clever lad! Go on with you, then. We'll see you at 1 o'clock.

ANDY exits.

SCROOGE

And thank you, Jacob Marley, for reminding me to stick to my good intentions!

BOB CRATCHIT enters

Good morning Bob, my boy! And a fine morning it is to start the New Year.

CRATCHIT (*shivering*)

I just hope it's the coldest day of the year, Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE

Doesn't matter, Bob, doesn't matter. There'll be plenty of coal to keep us warm while we work.

CRATCHIT

Yes, sir! And I hope we'll have plenty of work, too.

SCROOGE

No doubt of that at all. We're going to start off with a bang, and we'll be doing business in a new way from now on.

CRATCHIT

The changes you've been talking about this past week are truly exciting, sir, and I believe they'll make the business even more successful.

SCROOGE

I learned my lesson Christmas Eve. There'll be no more sly dealings from Scrooge and Marley. That's my New Year's Resolution.

SONG 2: RESOLUTIONS

THERE'LL BE NO MORE CLEVER DEALING
THERE'LL BE NO MORE GETTING 'ROUND

CRATCHIT

THERE'LL BE NO MORE CUTTING CORNERS
JUST TO BANK ANOTHER POUND

SCROOGE

ALTHOUGH OUTMANEUV'RING RIVALS IS
A THRILL I STILL RECALL

CRATCHIT

NOW YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THRILL'S THE PRIDE
THAT COMES BEFORE A FALL.

BOTH

RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
SCROOGE AND MARLEY WON'T BE DOING BUSINESS
LIKE THEY DID BEFORE
RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!

SCROOGE

I'VE A LOT OF MAKING UP TO DO TO EVEN UP THE
SCORE

ONCE I SMILED AND COUNTED PROFITS
AS I PILED UP THE GOLD
WHILE EVICTING DEADBEAT TENANTS
INTO WINTER'S BITTER COLD

CRATCHIT

DID IT GIVE YOU CAUSE TO WONDER IF
YOUR METHODS LACKED FINESSE

SCROOGE

NO, I TOLD MYSELF THEIR LAZINESS
HAD CAUSED ALL THEIR DISTRESS

BOTH

RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
NOW I UNDERSTAND THE PART THE MILK OF HUMAN
KINDNESS PLAYS

CRATCHIT

RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
AND A HELPING HAND CAN MAKE A FRIEND TO
BRIGHTEN UP YOUR DAYS

SCROOGE

AND BEFORE MY GHOSTLY FRIENDS GAVE
WARNING WHERE MY DANGER LAY
I WAS PLANNING TO IGNORE ANOTHER
PRECIOUS CHRISTMAS DAY
BUT THEY TOOK ME TO THE PAST AND FUTURE
SHOWED ME WHAT WAS RIGHT
AND MY FROZEN HEART WAS THAWED BEFORE
THE BLESSED MORNING LIGHT

BOTH

RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
EVERY DAY WE'LL WAKE AND IN OUR HEARTS IT WILL
BE CHRISTMAS MORN
RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
EVERY DAY WE'LL GLADLY CELEBRATE THE DAY THE
CHILD WAS BORN

SCROOGE

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN CHANGE THE FUTURE
BLEAK AS IT'S BEEN SHOWN TO BE
BUT I SWEAR I WILL TRY TO CHANGE
THE MAN THAT HAS BEEN ME!

Lights fade, scene change music comes up.

Scene 2

*Music fades, lights up on the Cratchit parlor. MRS.
CHARLOTTE CRATCHIT bustles from the kitchen
(offstage) and checks on the table, which is being set by*

*WILLIAM, 9 years old. MARTHA, 17, is sewing.
BELINDA, 11, is rolling a skein of yarn into a ball.*

MRS. CRATCHIT

Carefully, William – the glasses will break, and they’re practically brand new.

WILLIAM

Don’t see why I have to set the table – it’s girl’s work.

MRS. CRATCHIT

But I think you need to know how to do things around the house, too.

WILLIAM

Why?

BELINDA

Because no one will ever want to marry a toad like you, so you’ll have to take care of yourself forever and ever!

WILLIAM

Is that so? I can always hire a housekeeper, but you’ll never find anyone to marry you neither, you fubsy-faced know-it-all!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Now, now, stop the bickering, you two. Honestly, you’d hardly know it was St. Valentine’s Day. Martha, will you be able to get those new napkins hemmed in time for dinner?

MARTHA

Yes, Mama. I’m almost finished.

BELINDA

Valentine’s Day is for sweethearts, Mama, and William is NOT my sweetheart – he’s a detestable little snirp!

MRS. CRATCHIT

That’s enough, Belinda! Peter is bringing his young lady home for dinner tonight, and I hope you two won’t disgrace me by acting like hooligans. Oh dear, Peter and a sweetheart. I can’t believe he’s so grown up already.

WILLIAM

I can’t believe he wants to have a sweetheart! Girls are nothing but trouble – he told me that years ago!

MARTHA

Years ago he probably believed that. Now he’s more grown up, and he’s met someone who’s very special to him. Her name is Nell, which I think is a lovely name.

BELINDA

I think it's all too romantic! And I just hope she's pretty and likes us.

WILLIAM

"I hope she's pretty and likes us"...stupid girls!

MRS. CRATCHIT

William...

MARTHA

Oh Mama, do you think anyone will ever want to be my sweetheart?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Lord love you, dearie, of course I do!! As sweet and good as you are – there will be someone very special for you, and soon, you mark my words.

BELINDA

Me too, Mama?

MRS. CRATCHIT

You too.

MARTHA

How did you know Dada was your true love?

SONG 3: MY SWEETHEART

MRS. CRATCHIT

I WASN'T SEARCHING FOR LOVE
I WASN'T SEEKING "EVER AFTER"
I WASN'T LOOKING FOR THE TEARS AND LAUGHTER
THAT FOREVER BRINGS

BUT SOMEHOW LOVE FINDS ITS WAY
AS YOU WILL LEARN WHEN YOU GET OLDER
LOVE TIP-TOES UP AND TAPS YOU ON YOUR SHOULDER
AND YOUR HEART JUST SINGS

MY SWEETHEART CAME
ON A PLEASANT SUMMER DAY
HE WAS STRONG, HE WAS GENTLE
AND HE STOLE MY HEART AWAY
IT CAME OVER US SLOWLY
AS LOVE SOMETIMES GROWS
LIKE THE QUIET BLOOMING OF THE ENGLISH ROSE

ALL

WHEN YOU FIND YOUR SWEETHEART

WHEN YOU FIND YOUR LOVE
SOMETHING IN YOUR HEART WILL ANSWER HIS AND
YOU WILL KNOW, YOUR SEARCH IS DONE.

MARTHA

SOMEDAY MY SWEETHEART IS COMING AND I KNOW
HE'LL BE TRUE, HE'LL BE HONEST AND
HE'LL LOVE ME EVER SO
AND OUR FAMILY WILL FILL MY HEART
MY WHOLE LIFE THROUGH
AND WE'LL LOVE EACH OTHER JUST LIKE DAD AND YOU

ALL

WHEN YOU FIND YOUR SWEETHEART
WHEN YOU FIND YOUR LOVE
SOMETHING IN YOUR HEART WILL ANSWER HIS AND
YOU WILL KNOW, YOUR SEARCH IS DONE

BELINDA

MY SWEETHEART'S COMING
TO SWEEP MY HEART AWAY
HE'LL BE DASHING AND HANDSOME
AND I'LL LOVE HIM EVERY DAY
HE'LL BE CLEVER AND WEALTHY
AND HIS HAIR WILL CURL
AND MY FRIENDS WILL SAY THAT I'M A LUCKY GIRL!

ALL

AND WHEN YOU FIND YOUR TRUE LOVE
AND HE FINDS YOU
AND YOU PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER THAT YOU'LL LOVE
YOUR WHOLE LIFE THROUGH

MRS. CRATCHIT

THERE'S A GLOW THAT SURROUNDS YOU SO
EVERYONE KNOWS

MARTHA

LIKE THE FRAGRANT BLOOMING

BELINDA

LIKE THE GENTLE BLOOMING

ALL

LIKE THE RADIANT BLOOMING OF THE ENGLISH ROSE

MRS. CRATCHIT

My stars, what am I doing, dreaming around here while the roast is getting burned. William, is that table set yet? Belinda, finish up with that yarn now!

She bustles into the kitchen. BOB CRATCHIT and TIM enter. Bob is carrying a bunch of flowers, Tim is using a crutch, but not leaning heavily on it.

CRATCHIT

Bless this house and all in it! Martha – it's good to have you home. How are things at the millinery shop?

WILLIAM

Dad – would you tell Mum I shouldn't have to set the table, please!

MARTHA

Bless you too, Dad. Madame Celeste let me leave early so I can meet Peter's young lady. (*To Tim*) How are you today, Master Tim?

TIM

Fit as a fiddle, Martha. Will you read me a story before bedtime?

MRS. CRATCHIT enters from kitchen. BOB hides the bouquet behind his back.

MARTHA

Of course I will – right after dinner, while William is doing the dishes.

WILLIAM

DAD!!!

CRATCHIT

Don't be Daft, William, she's only teasing you. You can join Peter and me after dinner, for port and cigars.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Bob, don't be putting ideas into his head.

She crosses to Bob and kisses him, then kisses Tim and automatically checks him for fever.

MRS. CRATCHIT (cont.)

And how was your day at the business, Tim? Did you keep out of the way and not annoy Mr. Scrooge?

TIM

I sat right alongside Dad, and I watched everything he did. Mr. Scrooge said I was a capital little clerk and he didn't know how the business ever got along without me!

CRATCHIT

He was fine, Charlotte, no trouble at all. And Mr. Scrooge is very fond of him, you know.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Well, I'm just not used to it yet, but God bless him all the same. Tim is never so happy as when he goes to help his Dad at his work.

CRATCHIT

(Offers the flowers.)

And here's something for my Valentine. They're almost as lovely as you are.

MRS. CRATCHIT

They're beautiful! Thank you, my sweetheart! I'll put them right on the table so everyone can enjoy them.

As she turns toward the kitchen, the door opens and PETER ushers NELL WATSON into the room. Everyone stops what they're doing and turns to look at them.

PETER

Mother, Father, this is Nell Watson. Nell, my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Cratchit.

NELL

It's very nice to meet you.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Welcome, Miss Watson. Peter has spoken so often of you.

CRATCHIT

Welcome, my dear.

BELINDA

She is pretty!

WILLIAM

"She is pretty!"

MARTHA

Hush, you two.

PETER

And these are my sisters, Martha and Belinda, and my brothers, William and Tim.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Peter, you and your Father should relax a bit while Miss Watson and I get acquainted. Martha, why don't you read that story to Tim now, and Belinda and William, you should get your schoolwork done before supper. *(To Nell, as she ushers her toward the kitchen exit)* Tell me now, dear, how did you happen to meet our Peter?

PETER

I warned you...here comes the inquisition.

NELL

Well, Mrs. Cratchit, I was in the library one rainy afternoon and this polite young man offered to reach a book down from a high shelf for me...

MRS. CRATCHIT and NELL exit. Everyone else disperses per her instructions.

CRATCHIT

Peter, there's something I want to talk with you about. I know you've not been happy working at the foundry.

PETER

It's a decent job, but it's dangerous, and there's no future in it.

CRATCHIT

That assistant clerk position at Scrooge & Marley should be available soon. I could recommend you -

PETER

No, sir. I won't work for Mr. Scrooge.

CRATCHIT

Mr. Scrooge is a good employer.

PETER

Now, he's a good employer. Three months ago, he was a slavedriver!

CRATCHIT

But that's in the past, Peter! I told you about his experience last Christmas Eve.

PETER

Right. He had a dream.

CRATCHIT

He doesn't think it was a dream. He truly believes that the spirits who visited him that night were real, sent by Jacob Marley's ghost to warn him.

PETER

It doesn't make any difference what they were – he could still go back.

CRATCHIT

I don't believe that will happen. He still struggles, but he wins more and more often when temptation comes along.

PETER

I hope you're right, but I just don't think people change that much.

CRATCHIT

Scrooge & Marley is growing because people are beginning to trust him. A position there would give you great opportunity. *(Pause)* And, if I'm not mistaken, you're thinking of becoming a married man soon, right?

PETER

(Pause) Yes, Father. Isn't she wonderful?

CRATCHIT

She seems a lovely young woman...

PETER

And her family is wonderful, too! Her mother is a widow, and...

NELL and Mrs. CRATCHIT enter with the flowers, in a vase. Mrs. Cratchit puts them on the table.

MRS. CRATCHIT

There, that looks nice! And dinner will be ready in two shakes of a lamb's tale.

PETER

...Nell, come and tell Father and Mother about your mother's plans.

NELL

My mother was a governess before she married, and when my father passed away, she decided to return to teaching. So she's bought a large house, and plans to bring in children who have no place else to live and teach them.

MRS. CRATCHIT

And do you plan to be a part of this good work, Nell?

NELL

Yes. I'm to train as a teacher, and meanwhile, I'll care for the little ones.

MRS. CRATCHIT

That's just splendid! Now, come with me and I'll show you the quilt I'm making. It's to be a wedding gift to Peter – if ever he decides to marry.

Nell looks at Peter, who shrugs and smiles. She follows Mrs. Cratchit offstage.

PETER

That's Mum all right – subtle as a sledgehammer!

CRATCHIT

Your Mother has obviously adopted Nell already. But if you're to wed, you want to be able to provide for her. The foundry isn't the path to the life you want, is it?

PETER

No, I know it's not.

CRATCHIT

Think it over carefully, son. I'll not do anything you don't want, but I think it would be a good opportunity for you.

PETER

I will, I promise. Maybe by the time there is a position, I'll believe that Mr. Scrooge has truly changed.

Lights fade, scene change music comes up.

Scene 3

Music fades, lights up on PETER and NELL, walking home from their dinner at the Cratchits.

PETER

...and I promised I'd think about it, but I just don't see how I can forget the way he treated Father all those years.

NELL

I know it's hard, Peter, but I think you must try. Getting away from the foundry will be a big step forward for you.

PETER

But how can I be sure he won't go back to his old ways?

NELL

You say that your father trusts that the change is permanent, right?

PETER

Yes, he's really convinced.

NELL

Then maybe we should be more trusting, too.

PETER

If only there were something more behind it than this dream that he thinks is so real. A dream!

SONG 4: WHAT ARE DREAMS

NELL:

WHEN WE DREAM WE PLAN A FUTURE

WHEN HE DREAMED HE SAW HIS PAST
NOW HE'S PLEDGED TO CHANGE HIS DESTINY
CAN'T WE TRUST HIS DREAM TO LAST

WHAT ARE DREAMS BUT HOPES AND WISHES
THAT WE DARE TO SHARE AND PURSUE
TRUSTING THAT THE PATH BEFORE US
LEADS TO WHERE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE

PETER

That's one of the things I love about you, Nell Watson. You always see the best in people.

NELL

My mum always says, "Believe the best of people, and they'll always try to live up to your expectations".

PETER

All right, then, I'll truly try to believe in the new Mr. Scrooge.

BOTH:

WHAT ARE DREAMS BUT HOPES AND WISHES
THAT WE DARE TO SHARE AND PURSUE
TRUSTING THAT THE PATH BEFORE US
LEADS TO WHERE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE.

Lights fade and scene change music comes up as they exit.

Scene 4

Music fades, and lights up on Crenshaw's office. CRENSHAW is at his desk. Another man, HIGGINS, sits in front of the desk.

HIGGINS

And so you see, Mr. Crenshaw, if you would just give me a little more time, I will be able to redeem my mortgage, and you'll get all your investment back, plus the interest.

CRENSHAW

But my dear Higgins, waiting puts such a strain on one's nerves. Assuming ownership of your property will avoid all that stress, and relieve you of the obligation to repay me the money you so obviously do not have.

HIGGINS

But sir, that solution will also deprive me of my place of business.

CRENSHAW

Just so. I consider it one of the services I render society – to remove from the business arena those who are so manifestly unfit for it.

HIGGINS

But I won't be able to provide for my family! Mr. Crenshaw, I beg of you...

CRENSHAW

Enough! I am not running a charitable institution. The mortgage must be redeemed on its due date, June 30, which is tomorrow, or the deed must be transferred to me.

MR. HIGGINS

I see. *(Rises)* I will arrange the transfer of the deed to the property. *(As he reaches the door of the office, he turns)* And if ever I am able to reestablish myself in the business world, you may be sure that my custom will go to Scrooge and Marley!

He exits. CRENSHAW watches him go, then, with a contemptuous smile, returns to work.

CRENSHAW

Braddock!

BRADDOCK enters, rushed and harried.

BRADDOCK

Yes, sir?

CRENSHAW

Mr. Higgins will be transferring his office property to me tomorrow. Have the appropriate papers ready for his signature.

BRADDOCK

I'll do my best sir, but there's so much paperwork already awaiting my attention that I don't know...

CRENSHAW

Braddock, I do hope you're not about to propose, yet again, that I hire an assistant for you.

BRADDOCK

Oh no, sir. You made it quite clear last month that there's no hope of that.

CRENSHAW

Precisely. If you cannot handle the requirements of your position here, I will simply replace you with a clerk who can.

BRADDOCK

Please, sir, I can certainly perform my duties, but...

CRENSHAW

But what?

BRADDOCK

I was wondering if you would consider a new product that will increase the work I can accomplish without adding another employee to your staff.

CRENSHAW

Yes, what is it?

BRADDOCK

(enthusiastic)

It's called carbonated paper, and it enables one to make two copies of a document at the same time – one for the client and one for our files.

CRENSHAW

How?

BRADDOCK opens a folder and removes two pieces of paper and one of carbon paper. He arranges them and places them on Crenshaw's desk, jostling CRENSHAW as he does so.

BRADDOCK

You see, when one writes on the top sheet of paper...

He does so, again jostling CRENSHAW.

The impression goes right through.

BRADDOCK is concentrating so hard that he moves right into CRENSHAW's space, practically pushing him from his chair

And...

CRENSHAW

Yes, yes, I see.

BRADDOCK

It gives a wonderfully clear impression of what...

Again, he pushes CRENSHAW almost out of his chair

CRENSHAW

Henry, you may have noticed that you are causing me some little discomfort here. I recommend strongly against continuing to do so.

BRADDOCK

Leaping away from Crenshaw's desk.

Oh my goodness, I am sorry sir. I ...

CRENSHAW

Yes, yes. (*He looks at the carbon copy of Braddock's writing, then, dismissively*)

Fine. Go ahead and purchase some of this carbonated paper. It can't possibly make you any less efficient.

BRADDOCK, encouraged, clears his throat and continues.

BRADDOCK

And...Sir...There's something else I've been meaning to talk to you about, too.

CRENSHAW

What is it?

BRADDOCK

I've been going over the books for the first half of the year, and I'm afraid we're going through a bit of a rough patch.

CRENSHAW

Nonsense! I've seen a half-dozen new customers this week alone!

BRADDOCK

That's just it, Sir. We get new clients, but when I call on them to solicit additional business, they all tell me they're doing business with Scrooge & Marley now.

CRENSHAW

Blast Scrooge and his "resolutions"! Before he hallucinated his way into benevolence last Christmas, he was doing business exactly the way we do! And everyone hated him, too.

BRADDOCK

People even preferred to do business with us, because at least you pretend to be pleasant to them – at first. But if this keeps up, we'll be out of business in a year – unless we change our way of doing business, that is.

CRENSHAW

We will continue to do business in precisely the same way we have always done. It is *not* our business to coddle the inept or to educate the gullible.

BRADDOCK

Yes, Sir. Whatever you say, sir.

CRENSHAW

Surely you're not suggesting that we adopt the "fair and friendly" methods of our esteemed rival?

BRADDOCK

Mr. Scrooge's office is never empty, and I hear a lot of talk on the street about how he's a changed man, and all...

CRENSHAW

Yes, so I keep hearing. There is absolutely nothing more annoying than a reformed sinner, is there? (*Braddock doesn't respond.*) Come, come, Henry! It's the way of the world. Some of us are destined for success, and those who are not excuse their failures by painting us as villains.

SONG 5: LET'S ENJOY OURSELVES

BRADDOCK
IT'S A DIRTY JOB

CRENSHAW
I KNOW
BUT SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO IT
AND IF SOMEONE'S GOT TO DO IT
LET'S ENJOY OURSELVES!

SOMEONE'S GOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF THE HUMBLE AND THE LOWLY
AS WE BLEED THEM GENTLY, SLOWLY
LET'S ENJOY OURSELVES!

BRADDOCK
EV'RYBODY HATES US FOR THE THINGS WE DO
EV'RYBODY THINKS WE ARE APPALLING

CRENSHAW
NOBODY RECOGNIZES, SAD BUT TRUE –
THAT BEING A VILLAIN IS A CALLING!

AND WHEN SCROOGE OR SOMEONE LIKE HIM
STARTS IN TREATING PEOPLE FAIRLY
WE MUST STAND TOGETHER SQUARELY
AND DEFEND OURSELVES

IT'S A MORAL OBLIGATION
TO PROTECT THE STATUS QUO, AND
RUIN SCROOGE SO WE CAN GROW AND
JUST ENJOY OURSELVES

*BRADDOCK shows signs of buying into
CRENSHAW's philosophy.*

BEING A VILLAIN IS A THANKLESS TASK
NOBODY KNOWS THE WORK REQUIRED

BRADDOCK
HOW DO YOU STAND IT?

CRENSHAW
YOU MAY RIGHTLY ASK
BUT WHERE DOES A CAD GO TO GET FIRED?

CRENSHAW AND BRADDOCK *(to audience)*:
IT'S A PROFITABLE JOB
TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY
AND IF YOU ARE THINKING MAYBE
YOU'D ENJOY YOURSELF

THEN COME JOIN US AS WE BATTLE
HELP US FIGHT THE MIGHT OF HONOR
OR OUR WAY OF LIFE'S A GONER
LET'S DEPLOY OUR SELVES

WE'LL DEFEAT OUR OLD FRIEND SCROOGE
WITHOUT ANY HESITATION

BRADDOCK
WE'LL DESTROY HIS REPUTATION

CRENSHAW
CAST ASIDE YOUR INDIGNATION
"GOOD" AND "FUN" HAVE NO RELATION

BOTH
LET'S ENJOY OURSELVES!

A doorbell tinkles off-stage. BRADDOCK rushes off-stage while CRENSHAW, humming to himself, returns to his desk. BRADDOCK re-enters.

BRADDOCK

There's a Mrs. Isabel Watson, one of your mortgage clients, here to see you, sir.

CRENSHAW

She probably wants an extension on her mortgage, too. Really, these people are so predictable. Which property is it?

BRADDOCK

(consulting a file he's carrying)

Number Nineteen Threadneedle St. The house was in bad repair, but she's been making improvements to it, and the land is valuable – good location.

CRENSHAW

If she's fixed it up, we should be able to sell it easily after we foreclose. When is the mortgage due?

BRADDOCK

December 20.

CRENSHAW

Excellent! We'll turn a tidy profit before the end of the year. Show Mrs. Watson in.

BRADDOCK starts off-stage, then...

Wait just a moment, Braddock!

Quickly opening a journal-type book

Where is this property again?

BRADDOCK

It's located at the northeast corner of Threadneedle and High Streets.

CRENSHAW

*Still consulting the book and cross-referencing it
with a map on his desk*

Yes. And the others on that block are Scrooge properties. *(Beat.)* I wonder if this might be an opportunity to thrust a spoke through Scrooge's wheel.

BRADDOCK

What is that book, sir?

CRENSHAW

This book is my private record of mortgages held and rental properties owned by anyone whom I consider serious competition. Scrooge has always been at the top of that list.

BRADDOCK

But how do you get that sort of information?

CRENSHAW

There are always those who are willing to provide confidential information – for a price.

BRADDOCK

But isn't that illeg...uneth...not quite the thing, sir?

CRENSHAW

Sometimes, Henry, your innocence is endearing. This is not one of those times. *(Thinks)* We'll see. Show Mrs. Watson in, please. And bring her a cup of tea.

BRADDOCK *(astonished)*

A cup of tea, sir?!?

CRENSHAW

Yes, Henry. A cup of tea for our guest.

BRADDOCK exits, confused. He re-enters, ushering in MRS. WATSON, a woman of about 50. She is nicely dressed, and has a refined accent.

BRADDOCK

Mrs. Watson to see you, Sir.

CRENSHAW

My dear Mrs. Watson, what a pleasant surprise. You are well, I hope?

MRS. WATSON

Good morning, Mr. Crenshaw. Yes, I'm well.

CRENSHAW

Please, sit down and make yourself comfortable. (*She sits*) Now, how can I help you today?

MRS. WATSON

I'd like to discuss the terms of the mortgage you hold on my home on Threadneedle Street. I intend to use the property as a refuge for homeless children.

CRENSHAW

A truly noble undertaking. How may I be of assistance?

MRS. WATSON

I can provide for the children's needs out of my late husband's estate. The only problem is the mortgage you hold on the house.

CRENSHAW

I see.

MRS. WATSON

As you know, the redemption date is December 20.

BRADDOCK re-enters with the tea tray and begins to pour out the tea.

CRENSHAW

Is it? I hadn't thought to check.

BRADDOCK is a little confused, stops pouring and whispers to CRENSHAW

BRADDOCK

Oh no, sir. You remember just asked me...

CRENSHAW

That will do, Henry. Please attend to the task you were assigned.

BRADDOCK

Yes sir. Right away, sir.

He resumes pouring.

MRS. WATSON

Because the Benevolent Society has agreed to pay off the mortgage, I need you to extend the due date until the end of December, when the funds from their Christmas collection are available. I know this is somewhat unorthodox, but I assure you...

CRENSHAW

Please, my dear lady, go no further. Of course, the due date will be extended for as long as you need.

BRADDOCK reacts, almost spilling the tea.

Henry, adjust the due date on the mortgage document immediately. Come, Mrs. Watson, won't you have a nice cup of tea?

MRS. WATSON

Thank you, but now that you've relieved my mind of its greatest concern, I want to get right back to work on the house. I do appreciate your understanding in this matter.

CRENSHAW

Please, Mrs. Watson, you embarrass me.

MRS. WATSON

Then I will go with no more thanks. But I will remember you with gratitude. Good day.

She exits. CRENSHAW sits, smiling.

BRADDOCK

I don't understand, sir.

CRENSHAW

Of course you don't. *(Pause)* By the by, don't worry about altering the due date on Mrs. Watson's mortgage documents.

BRADDOCK

But sir, you said...

CRENSHAW

It's all right, Henry. I'll take care of it. *(Braddock hesitates)* Remember, you were just telling me how very busy you are.

BRADDOCK *(Still confused)*

Yes, sir.

CRENSHAW

Don't worry, Henry. It will all become clear to you in time.

Lights fade, scene change music comes up

Scene 5

Scene change music fades, then lights up on the interior of Scrooge's office, high summer. Bob's desk is in the outer office, and Scrooge's, through a doorway or arch, in the inner space. BOB is at his desk, working feverishly. SCROOGE enters.

SCROOGE

Bob! Still at it, hot as it is today? I thought you'd be gone home by now!

CRATCHIT

No time, Mr. Scrooge. Business is so good, I'm always behind.

SCROOGE

Is that so? Well, I guess it's time to hire that assistant for you. Have you spoken with your son about the position?

CRATCHIT

Yes sir. Several times, and I think he's just about ready to give clerking a go.

SCROOGE

Capital! Have him start as soon as he can, but remind him that this is a very junior level position.

CRATCHIT

I will. Now that he's convinced that Scrooge & Marley is a respectable company, he's ready to earn his advancement.

SCROOGE

Respectable? When were we not "respectable"?

CRATCHIT

That's not quite the right word. What I meant was that Peter is convinced now that the changes in...the business practices here are...permanent.

SCROOGE

I think you mean the changes in the proprietor, don't you? He's quite free with his opinions! I wonder how my other new friends talk about me when I'm not around.

CRATCHIT

Oh sir, Peter is young, and his judgments are sometimes harsh. You mustn't take...

SCROOGE

A fine thing when a whelp still wet behind the ears sets himself up in judgment of his elders! He can jolly well take his high and mighty judgment and see if *that* will give him any advancement. He can just find another...

SPIRIT

“It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge.”

SCROOGE

(To himself) Mrs. Cratchit’s toast from last Christmas! No wonder Peter had a poor opinion of me. *(Pause)* Never mind, Bob. I’m glad he’s ready to join us now!

CRATCHIT

Oh Yes, sir. *(Relieved)* I’m sure you’ll be pleased with him.

SCROOGE

Since he’s your son, I know he’ll be a hard worker.

CRATCHIT

He is indeed. And he’s planning to get married at Christmas time, so he’s especially anxious to have a good job like this one.

SCROOGE

Really? Then let’s get him started as soon as possible. He’ll want to have a nest-egg when his wedding day arrives, eh?

CRATCHIT

Yes sir! *(Pause)* And believe me, sir, your new friends are all happy to be your friends. You’ve proven yourself in so many ways these past several months.

SCROOGE

But I can’t help wondering if it’s enough to make up for all the years of being the miserable old skinflint I was.

CRATCHIT

I’m sure it’s enough, Sir. No one could have done more.

SCROOGE

I keep remembering Jacob Marley, and sometimes I can almost feel the chains I forged for myself all those years. *(Pause)* But I must believe I can change – for myself, and for Tim.

CRATCHIT

Tim’s certainly holding his own now, Mr. Scrooge. Dr. Jackson says the new tonic he’s taking has done him a power of good. And it’s been months since he needed his crutch to get around.

Pause

SCROOGE

You know, Bob, bringing your son into the firm could be – should be – the beginning of a new path for Scrooge & Marley. Until this year, I never thought about the future of the firm beyond myself, but now I do, often. And you're the only one I can think of to take it forward.

CRATCHIT

Sir! Oh, no sir! Your nephew...

SCROOGE

Fred has his law practice. He'll inherit a share in the firm, but he won't want to run it. You are the one who knows the business. You should take over, and you should be an owner if you're going to do that.

SONG 6: PASSING IT ON

SCROOGE

I BUILT WHAT I BUILT JUST TO BUILD IT
WITH NO THOUGHT OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I'M GONE
NOW I WANT TO BE SURE MY SHOES ARE FILLED, IT
GIVES ME PLEASURE TO THINK OF PASSING IT ON

PASSING ON WHAT YOU'VE BUILT MAKES THE
BUILDING WORTH THE WHILE
IT'S A THOUGHT THAT MAKES ME SMILE
AS I IMAGINE YOU AND YOUR SON
PASSING IT ON

CRATCHIT

OH SIR, IT ISN'T SEEMLY
I'M NOT A MERCHANT
I'M A SIMPLE CLERK

SCROOGE

AND THE YEARS I SO HEARTILY REGRET NOW
HOW I TREATED YOU -

CRATCHIT

THAT'S ALL DONE

SCROOGE

HERE'S A WAY I CAN FINALLY PAY MY DEBT NOW
THIS TRADITION'S BEGUN I'M PASSING IT ON.
FOR IT'S NOT JUST THE BUSINESS, THE PROFITS AND
THE DEALS

CRATCHIT

IT'S THE PLEASURE THAT ONE FEELS

BOTH
IN DEALING FAIR AND SQUARE
EVERYONE PASSING IT ON.

SCROOGE

Think of it, Bob. We'll build the business up together, then you and Peter will take it forward.

CRATCHIT

I never dreamed...

SCROOGE
MY HAND, TO SEAL THE DEAL NOW
LET'S MAKE IT REAL NOW
SAY WE'RE PARTNERS IN THIS PLAN

CRATCHIT hesitates, then shakes Scrooge's hand

BOTH
THROUGH THE YEARS AS WE BUILD UP
THE BUSINESS SIDE BY SIDE
IT'S A NAME WE'LL CLAIM WITH PRIDE
SCROOGE AND MARLEY CRATCHIT AND SON
PASSING IT ON AND ON, AND ON

CRATCHIT

I don't know what to say, Mr. Scrooge. A business to pass on to my son!

ANDY enters from outside

ANDY

Hello, Gov'nor! Hot day, isn't it?

SCROOGE

Indeed it is, Andy.

ANDY

Any errands for me to do?

SCROOGE

These need to be delivered to my barrister's office, if you've a mind to trot all the way to the Inns of Court in this heat.

ANDY

No trouble at all, Gov'nor! Me sister's a bit under the weather, and I can buy her an ice with the extra coin.

SCROOGE

Amelia's not been feeling well lately, has she Andy?

ANDY

It's just the bad summer air, Gov'nor. She'll be fine as soon as the cool weather comes.

SCROOGE

Yes, but then the cold will set in, and both of you will be coughing all winter from sleeping in damp basements and doorways.

ANDY

It's all right, Gov'nor. We're used to it, you know. And with what you pays me, I plans to buy Melie a real blanket this winter, to keep her snug and dry.

SCROOGE

Andy, I've asked before, but please, won't you come and live with me? You can bring your sister, too, you know.

ANDY

Thanks, Gov'nor, but no. It's not just Melie, but the others who stay with us that I've got to look out for. They're all right young, and the older chaps'd be bullying them out of the little bits they get their hands on if I weren't there.

CRATCHIT

Sir, remember when I was telling you about Peter's fiancée's mother – the woman who plans to open a home for children who live on the streets? Well, Mrs. Watson is just about ready to take in her first group of young ones. Why shouldn't Andy and his sister...?

SCROOGE

(interrupting, excited)

The very thing, Bob! These children would do far better under the care of ...

ANDY

What's this? Some sort of Home for Waifs?

CRATCHIT

Yes. There's to be a home for children, run by a widow who used to be a governess.

ANDY

Dunno, Gov'nor, places like that have too many rules, and folks as runs such places want a bloke to be taking baths all the time, and such like.

SCROOGE

But it would be good for Amelia, wouldn't it?

ANDY

I can take care of Melie, and I won't leave the others.

CRATCHIT

Perhaps Mrs. Watson would consider taking in all the children?

ANDY

Not likely, I don't think. And what do we know about this lady, anyway?

CRATCHIT

It's true, we've never met Mrs. Watson, but I do know her daughter. I'm sure she's a good woman.

ANDY

That's as may be, Mr. Cratchit, but she'll still likely want to tell me what to do all the time, and I ain't used to such things – nor do I want to get use to 'em.

SCROOGE

I understand that this Mrs. Watson intends to have a school there as well, so some day you could work in an office like this one. In fact, I can promise you that if you learn your letters and sums properly, there'll be a job at Scrooge and Marley if you want it.

ANDY (*wistfully*)

That would be aces, gov'nor. But if I takes Melie to some orphan's home, how do I know they won't take her away from me?

CRATCHIT

Why would they do that?

ANDY

In the workhouses, they makes the men and boys stay separate from the girls and ladies. Melie's too small to stand up for herself. The bigger girls would bully her. She'd be frightened...

SCROOGE

I'm sure that wouldn't happen, my boy.

ANDY

...No, it's too chancy by half. I thank you for what you done for us these past months, Gov'nor, but I ain't going to risk it. We done all right so far, and we're going to go on just as we are.

SCROOGE

(*Handing him the package and a coin*) Think it over a bit, lad, will you?

ANDY

All right, Gov'nor. But taking care of Melie and the others is my job, and I got to do what I think is best.

Lights fade, scene change music comes up

Scene 6

Scene change music fades, lights up on the London street scene, later that same day. It's market day,

lots of activity. The Constable talks to the fruit vendor. The urchins move through the crowd.

SONG 7: SUMMER DAY

VENDORS

ONLY MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN GO OUT IN THE
NOONDAY SUN
BUT OUT IN THE NOONDAY SUN IS WHERE WE CAN
GET THINGS DONE
IN THE DOG DAYS OF AUGUST WE ALL WORK TIL
WE'RE BARKING MAD
OUT IN THE HEAT, OUT IN THE STREET SELLING TO
EV'RYONE

CONNOR loiters in a deliberately "suspicious" manner by the fruit stand and the CONSTABLE.

CONSTABLE

What're you doing hanging about where decent folks are doing their business?

CONNOR

I got as much right as anyone else to be here!

CONSTABLE

And what if I says you don't? The fruit monger tells me that some of his prime apples tend to go mysteriously missing when you're about, an' I think I may have solved that there mystery.

He grabs CONNOR by the collar and begins to search his pockets. Connor wriggles and protests. While the Constable is engaged with Connor, AMELIA slips by him and steals three apples. She melts into the crowd.

LADIES

ENGLISH LADIES WILL NEVER ACKNOWLEDGE SUCH
THINGS
AS THE DROPLETS OF MOISTURE THAT SUCH WEATHER
BRINGS
FOR TIME OUT OF MIND, OUR MUMS TAUGHT US, YOU
KNOW
THAT HORSES SWEAT, AND MEN PERSPIRE, BUT
LADIES GLOW!

The Constable, releases Connor, who moves off, with a show of outraged innocence.

CONSTABLE

And don't let me find you hanging around this fruit stand or I'll run you in sure as my name's Bailey!

CONNOR

You can't run me in without you find something to run me in for, now, can you?

The CONSTABLE frustrated, starts after him again. CONNOR runs offstage with the Constable following.

BUSINESSMAN 1

OUR COLLARS ARE WILTING
OUR TOP HATS ARE TILTING
THIS HEAT MAKES OUR DARK WOOLEN
FROCK COATS A TRIAL

BUSINESSMAN 2

WE TRY TO BE COOL, TO MAINTAIN HABERDASHERY
BUT WHO COULD WEATHER THIS WEATHER IN STYLE

BUSINESSMAN 3

OUR TROUSERS ARE PLEATED
OUR BROWS OVERHEATED
WE NEED SOME RELIEF OR WE'LL POP

ALL

WE PRAY TODAY'S THE DAY
THAT SEES THE TEMPERATURE DROP

The CONSTABLE reenters just in time to see TUCKER emerging from under the baker's stall. He sneaks up and collars TUCKER, who struggles and protests

CONSTABLE

This time I've got you! Just what were you up to under there, priggish bread again?

TUCKER

Lemme go! I didn't steal nothing. You're always picking on me 'cause I'm little!

CONSTABLE

Picking on you, am I? Well let's just see whether there isn't some evidence hiding in one of your "little" pockets, shall we?

While the CONSTABLE is rifling TUCKER's pockets, JEN walks by, and takes the loaf of bread TUCKER

passes to her, hiding it under her shawl. She walks off, smiling.

ALL

ON MARKET DAY WE ALL
MUST GET OUR BUSINESS DONE
NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER
DUTY CALLS TO EVERYONE
THOSE WHO SELL, THOSE WHO BUY,
THOSE WHO GUARD US, THOSE WHO PINCH
SWELT'RING IN THE SUN WE'RE COOKED WELL DONE
WE'RE ALL MELTING INCH BY INCH

The Constable releases TUCKER, as Amelia and Liz approach them.

TUCKER

Told you I didn't steal nothing!

CONSTABLE

I knows you lot are priggging stuff from this market, and someday I'll catch you at it, I swear I will.

AMELIA

(In a sing-song tone, taunting him)

Oh, Constable Bailey....

When the CONSTABLE turns to AMELIA, TUCKER grabs another loaf of bread and runs off.

CONSTABLE

You there, you little imp. Didn't I see you helping yourself to some apples?

AMELIA

(Holds out both hands to show him they're empty. Very sincerely)

Oh no, Constable. I would never do anything so dishonest as that.

CONSTABLE

Don't you try to sweet talk me. You're just as bad as these guttersnipes you run around with, don't think I don't know it!

AMELIA saucily thumbs her nose at him, he starts after her, she runs into the crowd. He turns back to where TUCKER was, realizes that he's escaped

Now where did that rascal get off to?

He bustles off, blowing his whistle and looking for the boys.

VENDORS

ONLY MAD DOGS
AND ENGLISHMEN
GO OUT IN THE
NOONDAY SUN
BUT OUT IN THE
NOONDAY SUN
IS WHERE WE CAN GET
THINGS DONE
IN THE DOG DAYS
OF AUGUST WE ALL
WORK TILL WE'RE
BARKING MAD
OUT IN THE HEAT
OUT IN THE STREET
SELLING TO EV'
RYONE!

LADIES
ENGLISH LADIES
WILL NEVER
ACKNOWLEDGE
SUCH THINGS
FOR TIME OUT
OF MIND OUR MUMS
TAUGHT
US YOU KNOW

THAT HORSES SWEAT
AND MEN PERSPIRE
BUT LADIES GLOW

GENTS
COLLARS ARE WILTING
OUR TOP HATS ARE TILTING WE
NEED SOME RELIEF
OR WE'LL DROP
AND PRAY
TODAY'S THE DAY

THE TEMPERATURE DROP

ALL

OH WHERE'S THE MODERATION
ENGLAND'S FAMOUS FOR?
THE ZEPHYR BREEZES, MISTING SHOW'RS
AND COMFY TEMPERATURE?
HOW WE LONG FOR THE COOLNESS
OF OUR FAMOUS CREEPING FOGS
THIS UN-BRITISH HEAT HAS GOT US BEAT
WE'RE ALL GOING TO THE DOGS!

ANDY enters.

ANDY

Melie! C'mon over here!

AMELIA

Hallo, Andy. Fancy an apple?

ANDY

Where'd you get the coin to buy that?

AMELIA (*Indignant*)

I didn't buy it! I priggid it, I did, smooth as a baby's bottom. The fruit monger never saw me at all and Connor and me wound Constable Bailey up good and proper.

ANDY

Well eat it up right quick now – before he notices.

CONSTABLE reenters, sees AMELIA, and signals to the fruit monger. Neither ANDY nor AMELIA see them as they approach stealthily.

AMELIA

I'm too quick for him. (*She continues to eat.*) It's fun to have him chasing round after us.

ANDY

Where's the others?

AMELIA

They're all about here somewhere.

ANDY moves away, looking for the other urchins, the CONSTABLE pounces. The other four urchins appear in the crowd, watching.

CONSTABLE BAILEY

Ah-hah! Got you now!

AMELIA tries to run away from him. She runs right into the FRUIT MONGER.

And with the stolen property as well!

FRUIT MONGER

It's Newgate for you, my fine lass, and stealing is a transportation offense. You'll soon be off to Australia, see how you like that!

AMELIA

(Badly frightened)

Let me go! Oh please, let me go! I didn't...

CONSTABLE BAILEY

You didn't steal that there apple? Tell me another one. The likes of you don't have the coin to pay for it, I know that.

AMELIA

I do...I did...I...

ANDY

Excuse me, Constable Bailey. Has my little sister been causing trouble?

CONSTABLE BAILEY

Caught her red-handed with a stolen apple I have. *(Amelia has started to cry)* No use sniveling about it now. This apple was taken and not paid for. It's an open and shut case.

ANDY *(Severely)*

Melie, didn't I tell you to wait for me so I could pay for your apple? Shame on you! *(To the Fruit Monger)* I'm sorry, sir. How much do I owe you for my sister's apple?

CONSTABLE BAILEY

Now see here...

FRUIT MONGER

Tuppence ha'penny.

CONSTABLE BAILEY

But if you let him pay you for it, you can't prosecute the girl for the theft!

FRUIT MONGER

The apple's half-eaten. I rather have my money than nothing. *(He returns to his fruit stall.)*

CONSTABLE BAILEY

How'd you come by that money?

ANDY

I earned it, from Mr. Scrooge. You know I runs errands for him all the time now.

CONSTABLE BAILEY

(Grudgingly, to Amelia) You can go this time. But there'll be another, and soon, and no one won't be able to save you then.

*The CONSTABLE moves off into the crowd.
AMELIA immediately stops crying.*

AMELIA

That was clever of you, Andy.

ANDY

But what if I hadn't had any coin to pay with? I don't always, you know. You'd be on your way to...to...

The other urchins have gathered round them.

CONNOR

To ruddy Australia, that's where. Close thing, Melie. Good for you that Andy was about.

ANDY

But next time, I might not be there.

AMELIA

I had a plan. *(Proudly)* If the crying didn't work, I was going to bite him and then run away.

JEN

Come on now, emergency's over. What's for dinner? Anyone?

CONNOR

Jen and TUCKER prigged some lovely bread, and I helped the ostler at the Prince George feed the horses, so he give me this hunk of cheese.

LIZ

Goody! Toasted bread and cheese!

AMELIA

(Producing two more apples from her pockets)

And apples for afters.

TUCKER

Ah, Melie, you're a treasure, you are. Protecting the goods right through a close call with the Law.

ANDY

All right now, listen up all of you. This close call was too close. It ain't a joke when they catches you, you know. Transportation is forever.

TUCKER

If you're still alive when you get there.

CONNOR

We knows, Andy. But what can we do? We gotta eat, and you're the only one who ever has any coin.

LIZ

And it's still never enough to buy everything we needs.

ANDY

I know. *(Pause, then he takes a deep breath)* How would you like to be living in a nice warm house with plenty to eat and a warm bed every night?

TUCKER

Too right! And has her majesty invited us all to stay at Buckingham Palace this week?

LIZ

Oh, no, I can't go. I've nothing suitable to wear.

JEN

No problem, Liz me dear. We'll just go shopping in Mayfair after tea for a new wardrobe for the season.

CONNOR

An' don't forget to get the diamond necklace out of the strong-box, m'lady.

AMELIA

Ah, yes, and the matching brooch – and the bracelets!

SONG 8: AFTERNOON TEA (WITH HER MAJESTY)

SOLO

WHEN THE HERALD OF VICTORIA

KNOCKS ONE DAY UPON THE DOOR, YA
TREAT HIM KINDLY, YA SEE
FOR 'E'S COMIN' WITH A SUMMONS TO AN
AFTERNOON TEA –

ALL
WITH HER MAJESTY!

SOLO
WHAT AN HONOR! OH HOW THRILLING
SHINE YOUR SHOES – THAT COSTS A SHILLING!
WELL NO MATTER, HERE'S A HAT FOR YOU TO DON

SOLO
POLISH UP ME MUM'S TIARA
NEW KID GLOVES, MY STARS, WE ARE A
STYLISH GROUP – NO MATTER WHAT WE'RE
PUTTIN' ON

SOLO
NOW DRESS IN YOUR MOST POSH REGALIA
BEST COAT WITH THE LONGEST TAIL YA
WASH YOUR FACE AND COMB YOUR HAIR
NOW, BOW AND CURTSY

ALL
AND DON'T DARE STARE

MIND YOUR MANNERS, STAND UP STRAIGHT
DON'T BE CLUMSY, DON'T BE LATE
WEAR A SMILE, NOT A FROWN
'CAUSE YOU'RE MEETIN' WITH THE CROWN
YOU'RE HAVING AFTERNOON TEA

SOLO
THAT'S HER GRACIOUS

SOLO
MAGISTERIAL

SOLO
ROYAL AND IMPERIAL

ALL
MAJESTY RIGHT THERE!

ANDY

That's enough, you lot. This is serious. There's a lady, name of Mrs. Watson, as wants to take in some of us who lives on the streets.

CONNOR

And what does she want from us?

ANDY

Nothing, I don't think. Mr. Scrooge says she wants to teach us to read 'n' write 'n' cipher so's we can have proper positions when we grows up.

LIZ

And why should this Mrs. Watson want to help us?

CONNOR

We never did nothing for her – did we?

ANDY

One of those people as enjoys helping others, I guess.

TUCKER

Doesn't make any sense to me – giving us bed an' board an' not asking nothing back from us.

CONNOR

Right. There's got to be a catch in it somewhere.

JEN

Is it like going for to be an apprentice, Andy?

All the urchins react with horror at this idea.

CONNOR

I don't never want to be no apprentice!

TUCKER

Nor me!

ANDY

No, it's not that at all. It's more like... Well, I don't know what it's like, but we wouldn't have to steal and have the Constable breathing down our necks. Besides, Mr. Scrooge says it's a good idea, and he's done all right by me so far. I think we ought to try it out.

LIZ

What do you mean, try it out?

ANDY (*he's not exactly sure*)

Well... Well Melie 'n' me'll go see this Mrs. Watson, and see what she says. Then, if it looks like a good idea, the rest of you can come in, too.

AMELIA

It could be nice to have a real home, don't you think, and supper at a table and all?

LIZ

And maybe a kitten?

JEN

Yes! A Grey kitten with blue eyes!

CONNOR

All right, Andy. You go and see what you see, and then – we'll see.

The other urchins indicate agreement as the lights fade and scene change music come up.

Scene 7

Scene change music fades, lights up on Mrs. Watson's parlor, later that day. MRS. WATSON is briskly cleaning. NELL enters.

NELL

Mother, there are two children come to call.

MRS. WATSON

Do we know them?

NELL

No, but they look to be just the sort you've been looking for – pale, thin and none too clean.

MRS. WATSON

Ask them to come in, dear. At the very least, we can offer them a bowl of soup for their supper.

NELL

Yes, Mother.

She exits, and returns immediately with ANDY and AMELIA. They are nervous. Amelia is shy and Andy is a bit aggressive.

NELL

Mother, this is Andy and this is Amelia.

MRS. WATSON

How do you do, Andy and Amelia? Won't you come in and sit down?

NELL

I'll be in the kitchen, Mother, if you need me.

She exits.

ANDY

We've come to see about the house.

MRS. WATSON

I see. And what do you think of it?

ANDY

Dunno. Haven't seen but the front hallway and this parlor.

MRS. WATSON

And you, Amelia – what do you think?

AMELIA

It seems a lovely house.

MRS. WATSON

And why did you come to see about the house?

ANDY

We heard as how you was planning to take in such as us and we wanted to find out if it were true.

MRS. WATSON

Yes, it is true. This house will be a home for children who have no homes of their own.

ANDY

Melie and me lives in Cheapside.

MRS. WATSON

And where do you sleep?

ANDY

Mostly in doorways – and on steam grates in winter.

MRS. WATSON

Dear heaven! As young as you are! Where do you get your food?

ANDY

Sometimes I sweeps the street in front of a toff and his lady, and he gives me a copper. Sometimes I runs errands for a business gent who pays me for me time and service.

AMELIA

And sometimes things...drop off the carts in the market and we picks 'em up.

MRS. WATSON

I see. *(Pause)* Well, you seem to be just the children I'm looking for to fill up this lovely big house of mine! Would you like to give it a try?

AMELIA

Oh yes, mum! Can we come, even though we've been living in the street and...and...
sometimes priggging apples an' such when we're real hungry?

MRS. WATSON

Yes, dear. You see,

SONG 9: EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE

NO MATTER HOW FAR DOWN YOU FALL
NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS
IF YOU CAN GET BACK UP AND START AGAIN
THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS

FOR EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
STAND UP AND SHOW THE WORLD
HOW GOOD YOU ARE
YES, EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
SO TURN YOUR LIFE AROUND AND REACH FOR A STAR

NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY OF YOU
NO MATTER HOW BAD THE WORDS
I WILL BELIEVE IN WHAT I SEE YOU DO
THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS

FOR EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
STAND UP AND SHOW THE WORLD
HOW GOOD YOU ARE
YES, EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
SO TURN YOUR LIFE AROUND AND REACH FOR A STAR

NO MATTER HOW OFTEN YOU'VE STUMBLED
NO MATTER HOW BLACKENED YOUR NAME
I'LL ONLY BELIEVE WHAT I SEE IN YOU
AND I SEE THE BEST THAT CAN BE IN YOU
AND THAT IS ALL, YES THAT IS ALL THAT MATTERS

FOR EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
STAND UP AND SHOW THE WORLD
HOW GOOD YOU ARE

ANDY AND AMELIA JOIN IN
YES, EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
WE'LL TURN OUR LIFE AROUND
AND REACH FOR A STAR

ANDY

What would we have to do here?

MRS. WATSON

There would be chores, of course, for you would have to help us keep the house in order. And you would have to stop 'picking up' things that drop from the carts.

ANDY

(Desperately hoping, trying not to show it)

Is it true that you're going to teach reading and cyphering and such?

MRS. WATSON

Yes. I want you to grow up to be good citizens, able to hold decent jobs.

AMELIA *(fearfully)*

Will you be 'prenticing us out, mum?

MRS. WATSON

Not to the people who mistreat apprentices. When you've learned your letters and can do basic sums, I will look for good apprenticeships, with shop owners and 'business gents', as Andy calls them.

AMELIA

In a shop!! Like a bakery, Mum?

MRS. WATSON

Perhaps. Do you like to bake?

AMELIA

I dunno, Mum. I never was in a proper kitchen with an oven and all. But I likes to see the pretty cakes in the window at the bakery. I'd like to have a touch at learning how to do that!

MRS. WATSON

We shall certainly see, Amelia. And you, Andy, what sort of work would you like to learn?

ANDY

I've already got a position in mind, missus. The gent as hires me to run errands says as if I learns me letters and numbers, there'll be work for me in his office.

MRS. WATSON

You are an enterprising young man, Andy. Now, let's get you something to eat.

She takes each of them by the hand. Amelia's hand is still sticky from the apple.

But first, let's get you cleaned up and into some other clothes. *(She calls offstage)* Nell!

ANDY

I knew it – baths!!

AMELIA

New clothes!

NELL enters

MRS. WATSON

We have the first new members of our family here, and they need hot baths, clean clothes and something good to eat. Can you help them?

NELL

Of course, Mum. Come along now, there's gingerbread, still warm from the oven. We'll have it with our tea.

AMELIA whispers to ANDY.

ANDY

Right, Melie. (*To Mrs. Watson, very businesslike*) Missus, there's some others as is friends of ours, who might be you would want to have come to stay here. They're good chaps, not ruined by the streets like some we know, an' they listens to me – well, pretty near all the time.

MRS. WATSON

In that case, Andy, I'd like very much to meet them, and as soon as possible.

ANDY

No trouble, Mum, they're outside, waiting to see what I thinks.

MRS. WATSON

Well, sir, bring them on in!

ANDY exits.

NELL

I'll begin drawing their baths, Mother.

MRS. WATSON

Thank you, Nell.

NELL exits.

AMELIA

Thank you very much, Mum, for taking us in like this.

MRS. WATSON

It was very brave of you to come, Amelia, when you didn't know what you might find here.

AMELIA

Well, Mr. Scrooge told Andy he should come here so we wouldn't have to sleep in the doorways no more, and Andy can have schooling and I can learn to bake...

MRS. WATSON

Mr. Scrooge sent you?

AMELIA

Yes, Mum – Mr. Scrooge of Scrooge & Marley.

MRS. WATSON

How extraordinary! I wouldn't have thought he'd have an interest in street children.

AMELIA

Oh yes, Mum, Mr. Scrooge is the gent what pays Andy for running errands. He pays him sixpence, or even a shilling. Andy buys us fresh bread and sometimes, jam to go with.

MRS. WATSON (*to herself, smiling*)

And I had thought him past praying for.

ANDY re-enters with LIZ, JEN, TUCKER and CONNOR.

ANDY

All right, now, you lot. Make your how-d'ye-dos to Mrs. Watson.

The children line up and mumble their greetings.

MRS. WATSON

I'm very pleased to meet you all, and I want to get to know each of you. But first, I think we need to get you all cleaned up.

There is some muttering among the children

ANDY

No growsin'! Here's how it works in this here house. Mrs. Watson is your new Mum, so ye must do as she says. Ye keeps y'self clean and ye does your chores. Ye study your letters and most of all, ye don't prig nothing at all.

AMELIA (*excited*)

An' Mum is going to teach us to bake and sew and we're to have new clothes that fit and aren't all dirty like these an' there's gingerbread for tea an' she's very nice and lovely.

SONG 10: EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE (Reprise)

The other four urchins are still leery of moving into the house. Through the first four lines of the reprise, ANDY and AMELIA move among them, urging them to commit to the idea.

ANDY AND AMELIA

**ANOTHER NEW DAY WILL COME FOR US
ANOTHER NEW WAY WE CAN SEE
WE'LL MAKE A HOME**

WE'LL MAKE OUR OWN FAMILY

It works. The other urchins mime their agreement.

**MRS. WATSON AND ALL THE URCHINS JOIN IN
FOR EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
TO STAND AND SHOW THE WORLD
HOW GOOD YOU ARE
YES, EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE
SO TURN YOUR LIFE AROUND AND REACH FOR A STAR**

Lights fade, scene change music comes up.

Scene 8

*Scene change music fades, lights up on SCROOGE,
CRATCHIT and PETER in the office of Scrooge &
Marley, hanging a Christmas wreath in the outer office.*

SCROOGE

A little to the left there, Bob. And a little higher. Yes, yes, that's good. *(They admire the effect.)*
You lads have done a splendid job! Now, Peter, if you're ready, we can go over that new
accounting system you're proposing.

PETER goes to his desk and gathers some papers.

CRATCHIT

It does look nice, doesn't it? Warm and cozy.

SCROOGE

A far cry from other years, eh Bob?

CRATCHIT

I don't even remember other years, Mr. Scrooge. You've made so many changes around here
that it seems like a different business altogether.

ANDY enters, dressed in a warm coat and scarf.

ANDY

Hello, all! Looks like the Christmas spirit has visited here right enough.

CRATCHIT

Good morning, Andy!

SCROOGE

Andy! Just the man I was looking for! Can you wait while Peter and I talk, then I have a
package for you to take to the Post Office.

ANDY

Righto, Gov'nor.

ANDY, PETER and SCROOGE go into the inner office.

SCROOGE

Come in, Peter. Let's see what you have here. Pay attention now, Andy, you'll need to understand these things someday.

PETER

If you'll look over this projection, Mr. Scrooge, you can see that changing our system to end the cycle for all accounts on the last day of the month, will simplify the bookkeeping.

SCROOGE

But will this affect our customers, Peter? Will it be a hardship on them?

PETER

We...er, you...could allow them to skip a month and begin the new schedule at the end of the second month.

SCROOGE

Hmmm. *(slightly indignant)* Skip a month – you want me to carry their debts for them for a month, is that it? *(Trying to talk himself down from his irritation)* Of course, the interest on their accounts would continue to accrue on the higher principal.

PETER

That is so, sir. However, forgiving the interest on the changeover month would be excellent for customer relations.

SCROOGE

Forgive the interest? That's giving away fairly earned profits! I'm all for honest dealing, but I don't see why I should forfeit my profits!

ANDY

Gov'nor, you're always telling me that customer relations is...

SCROOGE

People would think I'd gone crazy if I did that. Humbug! It's an outrageous idea, and I won't do it! No more discussion!

SCROOGE turns away, fuming. PETER and ANDY leave the inner office.

SPIRIT

“Every person has a right to take care of themselves. He always did. *(Changing voice to indicate another person speaking)* That's true, indeed. No man more so. *(First voice)* Why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? He'd have had someone to look after him, instead of gasping

out his last breath alone. (*Second voice*) It's the truest word that was ever spoke. It's a judgment on him."

SCROOGE

The charwoman and the laundress! Their very words, as they sold off my belongings after I died. (*Bitterly*) The only pleasure I ever gave them! (*He struggles with himself.*) But I charge a fair interest rate. It's only fair that I should make a profit.

Thinks some more.

SCROOGE (cont.)

The charwoman took the very shirt from my back, without a second thought. How she must have despised me!

He thinks some more.

If I cannot be generous when it's difficult, then the claims I've made to be a changed man are empty indeed. Peter!

PETER reenters the inner office. ANDY follows him to the doorway.

SCROOGE

Let's take another look at this. (*He scans the papers*) Perhaps it's not a complete humbug after all. In fact, it's a sound idea, Peter, and we'll put it into effect as soon as may be.

PETER

(*Happy and enthusiastic again*) And if our bookkeeping is simpler, you won't have to hire another clerk to handle the new business we're bringing in now, so it would be an overall cost saving to you, even if you do... (*Realizing he's headed into dangerous territory, but unable to stop himself*)... forgive... the interest.

SCROOGE

(*Struggles with himself, then*)

Yes, yes, all right. The interest is forgiven during the changeover month. We'll announce the change this month, to take effect in January.

PETER

Very good, sir! Thank you, sir.

*PETER happily exits to the outer office.
SCROOGE reaches for a large envelope and begins addressing it.*

ANDY

Good show, Gov'nor. That'll give folks their jollies, that's for sure.

SCROOGE

Jollies?

ANDY

Y'know, they'll laugh and smile. Like they're happy, you know? You saving them some money and whatnot.

SCROOGE

Ah, I see. (*Chuckles*) "Jollies" indeed! Well, (*handing Andy the envelope and tossing him a coin*) off you go now. Be sure this catches the evening post.

ANDY

Will do, gov'ner. Cheery-by!

ANDY exits. BOB enters with some papers.

SCROOGE

(*Still chuckling*) "Jollies"! This younger generation has a language all its own. And that young firebrand of yours is turning our business inside out, too!

CRATCHIT (*proud*)

New ideas often come from fresh perspectives, you know sir.

There is a burst of happy noise from outside.

SCROOGE

There seems to be rather a lot of chatter out on the street today, chilly as it is.

CRATCHIT

Everyone's getting ready for the Christmas Fair tomorrow. My little ones are all excited that I can come with them this year.

SCROOGE

Peter, I suppose you're squiring your young lady to the fair?

PETER

Yes sir.

SCROOGE

And how are the wedding plans coming along?

PETER

We're to be married on Christmas Eve. You will be there, won't you, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Of course! I look forward to celebrating with you. (*To himself*) I just wish that, when I had the chance for such happiness, I'd had the good sense to hold onto it.

PETER and CRATCHIT look surprised.

Yes, even old Scrooge was young once. *(To himself)* Young and terribly, terribly foolish.

SCROOGE *(Cont.)*

He shakes off his mood

Well, you and Miss Watson will have a happy life together, I'm sure.

CRATCHIT

Will you be coming to the fair, sir?

SCROOGE

Indeed I will! And now, if there's nothing else, you two may as well close up for the day and go on home. Get a head start on the festivities, what?

CRATCHIT

There's nothing that won't wait until Monday. Come along, Peter – Good-night, Mr. Scrooge.

PETER

Yes, good-night, sir, we'll see you tomorrow at the fair.

PETER and BOB exit. SCROOGE goes back to his desk, humming. As he begins working, the lights fade and scene change music rises.

Scene 9

Music fades. Lights up on Scrooge's office, later that evening. SCROOGE, working. CRENSHAW and BRADDOCK knock at the outer door.

SCROOGE

Who's there? Can I help you?

CRENSHAW

It's only I, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

Crenshaw? *(Puzzled and on his guard)* What brings you to my office? Come in, come in!

CRENSHAW

Are you are acquainted with my clerk? Mr. Scrooge, Henry Braddock.

SCROOGE

Sir.

BRADDOCK

Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE

What can I do for you gentlemen?

SCROOGE leads the way into his inner office.

CRENSHAW

Wait here, Henry, I shall have need of your services soon, I believe.

*CRENSHAW follows SCROOGE into the inner office.
BRADDOCK waits in the outer office. He can hear
what is going on, but takes no part in it.*

I just stopped in to see if we couldn't do a little business together, you and I.

SCROOGE

Do business together? Why man, we're usually competing for the same business! What makes you think we can do business together?

CRENSHAW

A simple transaction that will, I think, be good for both of us. A barter, in fact.

SCROOGE

Barter? You want to trade something with me?

CRENSHAW

How pleasant it is to do business with someone who grasps the essentials as quickly as you do! Yes, a trade is exactly what I have in mind. But first, allow me to congratulate you on the recent growth of Scrooge & Marley's export trade.

SCROOGE

(Pleased and a bit flattered)

Thank you, Crenshaw.

CRENSHAW

Nigel, please, Ebenezer. I fancy we're too long acquainted to stand on ceremony with each other.

SCROOGE

Nigel, then. Yes, Nigel, the business has grown very well this past year. I've even had to take on an extra clerk to handle the volume.

CRENSHAW

Admirable, my friend! You're becoming a true conglomerate.

SONG 11: YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL

EACH NEW DAY WHEN I WAKE
AS I TIE MY FRESH CRAVAT
I AM FILLED WITH THE SENSE OF WHAT YOU ARE
THAT I AM NOT

AND I FEEL SUCH ADMIRATION
FOR YOUR VISION AND SUCCESS
THAT ALTHOUGH WE'RE BUSINESS RIVALS
I AM DRIVEN TO CONFESS THAT
YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL

CRENSHAW

And is your mortgage business going well, too?

SCROOGE

(warming to his topic)

Yes, yes! No problems there.

CRENSHAW

Just as I expected.

EV'RY BANKER AND TRADESMAN
AND MERCHANT KNOWS YOUR NAME
AND FROM FLEET STREET TO CHEAPSIDE
THEY ALL SPEAK OF YOUR FAME
WHEN THE LIST OF BUSINESS GENIUSES
IS CARVED ON HIST'RY'S WALL
THEN THE NAME OF EBENEZER SCROOGE
WILL BE THE FIRST` THEY CALL
FOR YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL

SCROOGE

No, really, Nigel. You're too kind.

CRENSHAW

It's no more than you deserve, Ebenezer.

YOU'VE NO EQUAL, NO PEER
AS A GREAT ENTREPRENEUR
EV'RY VENTURE YOU TOUCH
TURNS TO GOLD AS IT WERE
AND YOUR STAR SHINES SO BRIGHT IN THE
COMMERCIAL FIRMAMENT
YET YOU'RE ALSO KNOWN TO ALL
AS AN UPRIGHT HONEST GENT, YES
YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL

AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL
TO EV'RY COLLEAGUE GREAT AND SMALL
AND THE LEGEND OF SCROOGE AND MARLEY
ALWAYS WILL ENTHRALL SO LONG AS
FUTURE GENERATIONS HEAR YOUR EXPLOITS
AND RECALL THAT
YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL!

SCROOGE

(Now fully engaged in Crenshaw's flattery)

Well, Nigel, I was always held to have a good head for business. What was it you wanted to propose to me? A trade, I believe you said?

CRENSHAW

Oh, yes, indeed. I almost forgot. *(Laying down a map of London)* Ebenezer, I hold title to a prime piece of property here, on Threadneedle Street. *(BRADDOCK, out of Scrooge's sight, reacts.)* You hold title on this very similar property in Harrowgate. I've been looking at the locations of our other properties, and, as you can see, if we exchange these properties we will each own an entire block of prime city real estate.

SCROOGE *(looks at map)*

Threadneedle Street, you say. Yes, I already own three properties there, right along High Street. There's food for thought here.

CRENSHAW

I agree, Ebenezer. I have a contract here...

He lays the contract on Scrooge's desk.

...that transfers the titles – yours to me and mine to you for the mutually agreed-upon sum of one shilling each.

SCROOGE

(Still checking the map and other papers)

Yes, it looks as if the properties are very similar in value. There's no denying that the exchange would increase the value of our holdings. But my property is vacant and ready to use – is yours?

CRENSHAW

The property is occupied, but there is a rather substantial mortgage. Payment is due in just a few days, and it's most unlikely the borrower will be able to make that payment. Rather a feckless type, I'm afraid.

SCROOGE

A poor choice of borrower, eh Nigel?

CRENSHAW

Indeed, Ebenezer, I cannot claim to be as wise as you are in choosing my clients. In this case, I've already been approached for an extension on the flimsy pretext of "certain payment" at some vague future date, but I think this will go down in my book as one of my mistakes.

SCROOGE

And I'm to pull your fat out of the fire, is that it?

CRENSHAW *(troweling it on)*

If you would, my friend. After all, you're the only man in London who could take a defaulting loan and turn it into control of a whole city block! You'll be able to foreclose before the year is out, and then you can do what you like with the property.

SCROOGE

Oh, all right. We businessmen have to stick together, don't we? I'll do it!

CRENSHAW

Excellent! I do so admire a man of decision. I'll just sign here (*he does so*), and you sign there (*hands contract and a coin to Scrooge, who signs and ceremoniously returns the coin*). (*Crenshaw pulls another document out of his pocket and signs it*) And here is the mortgage, signed over to you. (*Hands mortgage to Scrooge*) Done and done! Henry!

*BRADDOCK comes to the door of the inner office.
CRENSHAW hands him the contract.*

Henry, prepare a fair copy of this contract. I shall return to the office to sign it, and you will return it to Mr. Scrooge tonight for his signature. Take care – the ink is still not dry.

BRADDOCK

Yes, sir. (*To Scrooge*) I shall return by 6PM, Sir, if that is convenient.

SCROOGE

There's no need to rush, Nigel.

CRENSHAW

I say let's get it all settled and done with before we adjourn for the holiday festivities.

SCROOGE

Very well then, Mr...Braddock, it is? Yes, Mr. Braddock. I shall certainly still be here at 6PM, but not much later than that.

BRADDOCK

I shall return before you leave, Sir.

BRADDOCK starts to exit, holding the unfolded contract by one corner. A piece of carbon paper falls to the floor. Puzzled, he turns the pages of the contract. When he comes to the last page, he looks at Crenshaw, startled. CRENSHAW, standing in the doorway between the offices, points silently toward the outside door. BRADDOCK hesitates, then exits.

CRENSHAW

You know, Ebenezer, it just occurred to me – with control of the whole block, once you foreclose you could tear down the existing buildings and put up a more profitable office building. Think of it - the Ebenezer Scrooge Building!

SCROOGE (*entranced*)

The Scrooge Building! That would be something, don't you think?

CRENSHAW

(As if enthusiasm has carried him away)

An entire city block! What a monument to your success that will be! It will certainly show those who mock you behind your back that you're a force to be reckoned with. It will stand for generations as...

SCROOGE

Mock me? Who mocks me?

CRENSHAW

("Distressed")

Did I say "mock"? Oh dear, my runaway tongue.

SCROOGE

Who mocks me?

CRENSHAW

No, no. I really can't say... It's too... Oh very well, Ebenezer, but really, I hate to be the one to tell you this.

SCROOGE

Hate to tell me what?

CRENSHAW

Some...few...people – are saying that you've become soft in what *they* call your 'old age'...

SCROOGE

Soft? What do they mean, soft?

CRENSHAW

I've...heard them say...these are only rumors, mind you...that you're doing foolish things like forgiving interest due and...

SCROOGE

Forgiving interest – Peter! Bob! Are my clerks gossiping about my business practices? Are they laughing at me, too?

CRENSHAW

I have not actually seen the Cratchits do any such thing, but there are reports... You know there are those who are never content unless they can find an excuse to laugh at their betters....And many do look on your sponsorship of that young street urchin as a sign of...well...

SCROOGE

Andy is a friend! Andy is a great help to me!

CRENSHAW

Andy is boasting behind your back that he's got ... how does he put it...“a right soft touch in old Scrooge”.

SCROOGE

Andy? Andy says that?

CRENSHAW

He says he “gets his jollies” out of entertaining people with his imitation of you as ...well...Oh, please don't make me tell you any more of these hurtful things!

SCROOGE

His “jollies”. (*Pause*) Please, go on. Imitations, you say?

CRENSHAW

He says you are so desperate to atone for past sins that you hear voices telling you how to “be a better person”. He says that anything he wants, he can get by playing on your guilt.

SCROOGE

Andy says that? And people believe him?

CRENSHAW

I'm afraid the uninformed are inclined to take his opinions seriously.

SCROOGE

Laughing at me? But they always greet me as a friend...as someone they like and respect.

CRENSHAW

It is sad, don't you think, that people can be so two-faced? But there is a way to regain their respect. That building we were discussing. That would do it, by George!

SONG 12: YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL (Reprise)

I CAN SEE MASSIVE DOORS
WITH “E. SCROOGE” ABOVE THE FRAME
IT IS THRILLING TO CONTEMPLATE
A BUILDING WITH YOUR NAME
AND FOR CENTURIES THE LEGEND WILL BEAR
WITNESS TO YOUR FAME
YOUR ADMIRERS WILL RAISE A GLASS
AND TOAST TO YOUR ACCLAIM
AND YOU'LL BE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL

AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL
YES, SUCH A BUILDING GREAT AND TALL
WILL INSPIRE ASPIRATIONS
FROM THE BIGGEST TO THE SMALL
ITS GRAND PROPORTIONS AND FAÇADE
WILL PROMPT THE FUTURE TO RECALL
THAT YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL!

SCROOGE

I'll teach them to laugh at me! They won't be able to forget Scrooge, even if they want to!
(*Looking at mortgage*) I'll build a splendid building – that will show them! (*Reacts*) Hmmph!
The borrower is a Mrs. Watson! Is that the woman who opened an orphanage recently?

CRENSHAW

Yes. A good hearted soul, but not very realistic. She seems to think the business community should underwrite her plans to support children like your Andy while they...

SCROOGE

While they take advantage of others and mock them behind their backs! And I thought I could change my life! I thought they were my friends! (*Bitter*) Why did I bother to try!?

CRENSHAW

Don't dwell on it, Ebenezer. You have the means here to show them all.

SCROOGE

Oh yes, they'll learn! If my "friends" make me choose between being a hard-headed businessman and a laughingstock, I'll make sure they regret it.

The following should be staged in an "angel-devil" set-up, SCROOGE in the middle, SPIRIT and CRENSHAW on either side.

SONG 13: ACT I FINALE

SPIRIT

I will not shut out the lessons that they teach
O tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone.
THOSE ARE THE WORDS YOU SAID LAST YEAR
AS YOU BEGAN TO SEEK A PATH
TO FREE YOU FROM THE FEAR OF DYING ALL ALONE

CRENSHAW

THOSE WHO LAUGH, THOSE WHO MOCK, THOSE WHO
SNICKER AT YOUR NAME
WILL BE STYMIED WHEN YOU SHOW
THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THEIR GAME
AND THEIR SNEERS WILL TURN TO SNIV'LING WHEN
YOU SHOW THEM YOU ARE STILL
THE SAME RELENTLESS BUSINESSMAN
THEY ALWAYS KNEW
YOU'RE STILL KING OF THE HILL
YES, YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE TO US ALL

SCROOGE

I THOUGHT THEY WERE MY FRIENDS
I THOUGHT THEY CARED FOR ME
NOW I COME TO SEE I'M A LAUGHINGSTOCK
SO THEY THINK THAT I'M A FOOL
THE ONES WHO DARE TO BE
AMUSED AT ME ARE IN FOR QUITE A SHOCK

SPIRIT

This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want.
Beware them both, and all of their degree,
BUT MOST OF ALL, BEWARE THIS BOY,
FOR ON HIS BROW, I SEE
THAT WRITTEN WHICH IS DOOM,
UNLESS THE WRITING BE ERASED

SCROOGE

The spirit's words! Those wretched children –
hungry, cold and hopeless, sheltering in his warmth

CRENSHAW

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE FOR "FRIENDS" LIKE THAT
THEY'RE NOT LIKE US, THEY'RE NOT OUR KIND,
THEY'RE NOTHING

SCROOGE

I TRIED TO WIN THEIR HEARTS
I LIVED THE GOLDEN RULE SINCERELY
MY ACTIONS AIMED SO CLEARLY
JUST TO MAKE AMENDS

CRENSHAW

DON'T LET THEM KEEP YOU DOWN WITH THEM
THINK OF THEM NOW
THINK OF THEIR MOCKING LAUGHTER

SPIRIT

"I'M NOT THE MAN I WAS," YOU SWORE

CRENSHAW

THEY'LL LAUGH NO MORE

SPIRIT

SAID YOU WERE STRONG
YOU SWORE YOU'D CHANGED FOREVER

CRENSHAW

THE MAN YOU WERE BEFORE WAS STRONG

HE WOULDN'T REST UNTIL HE TAUGHT THEM
NOT TO MOCK THE NAME OF SCROOGE NO NEVER

SCROOGE

HA! THEY'LL FIND THAT I'M THE MAN
WHO WIPES THE SMILE FROM EVERY FACE
AS I RECLAIM MY PLACE IN THE SPACE
IN THEIR HEARTS THAT KNOWS FEAR

SPIRIT

THIS IS YOUR GREATEST TEST, SO HAVE A CARE
I AM IGNORANCE. I AM WANT. BEWARE! BEWARE!

SCROOGE:

(Spoken) Humbug!!!

ACT I CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene 1

Lights up on the London Street exterior. The next day at the Christmas fair – crowds of people, vendors, all the signs of a big celebration.

SONG 14: CHRISTMAS FAIR MADRIGAL

ENSEMBLE

EVERYTHING (EVERY WONDERFUL THING)
YOU COULD POSSIBLY (POSSIBLY) DESIRE
YOU CAN FIND AT THE CHRISTMAS FAIR
ANYTHING (ANY MARVELOUS THING)
IS FOR SALE OR FOR HIRE
AT THE HAYMARKET HOLIDAY FAIR
FA--LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA--LA-LA
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA

SOLO LINES

IF YOU NEED TO BUY A GOOSE THAT IS FAT AND TASTY
ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PUDDING,
EITHER PLUM OR HASTY
HAVE A HAM, BUY SOME JAM, OR SPICES FROM THE EAST
WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED
TO FIX YOUR CHRISTMAS FEAST

ENSEMBLE

EVERYTHING (EVERY WONDERFUL THING)
YOU COULD POSSIBLY (POSSIBLY) DESIRE
YOU CAN FIND AT THE CHRISTMAS FAIR
ANYTHING (ANY MARVELOUS THING)
IS FOR SALE OR FOR HIRE
AT THE HAYMARKET HOLIDAY FAIR
FA--LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA--LA-LA
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA

SOLO LINES

PUT THESE CANDLES IN YOUR WINDOWS SHED A
LOVELY GLOW
A POMANDER TO SCENT THE AIR
A SPRIG OF MISTLETOE
HERE'S A NICE WREATH FOR YOU
TO DECORATE YOUR DOOR
WIND A GARLAND 'ROUND THE BANNISTER,
YOU'LL NEED MUCH MORE

ENSEMBLE

EVERYTHING (EVERY WONDERFUL THING)

YOU COULD POSSIBLY (POSSIBLY) DESIRE
YOU CAN FIND AT THE CHRISTMAS FAIR
ANYTHING (ANY MARVELOUS THING)
IS FOR SALE OR FOR HIRE
AT THE HAYMARKET HOLIDAY FAIR

SOLO LINES

HAVE YOU GOT A SHOPPING LIST OF CHRISTMAS TOYS?
DOLLS AND TEA SETS FOR THE GIRLS,
HOOPS AND BALLS FOR BOYS
MUSIC! THE PERFECT GIFT FOR EITHER GENDER
DRUMS OR TRUMPETS, HARPS, KAZOOS?
SEE YOUR MUSIC VENDOR!

ENSEMBLE

FA--LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA--LA-LA
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA
FA--LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA--LA-LA
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA
O CHRISTMAS TREE! O CHRISTMAS TREE!
TRADITION BORN IN GERMANY
O CHRISTMAS TREE! O CHRISTMAS TREE!
YOU FILL PRINCE ALBERT'S HEART WITH GLEE
IMPORTED BY THE QUEEN'S DECREE
EACH LOYAL BRITISH FAMILY
NOW PROUDLY PAYS A TRIFLING FEE
TO BUY A CHRISTMAS TREE
FA--LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA--LA-LA
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA
FA--LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA--LA-LA
LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA

The SIX URCHINS appear. They are cleaner and better dressed than they were previously. They are joined by BELINDA, TIM and WILLIAM.

BELINDA

It's going to be a lovely wedding, don't you think, Melie? I'm so excited to be part of it!

AMELIA

Me, too. Just wait until you see Miss Nell's dress!

LIZ

It's (*Insert costume color here*) and it's got a lace collar that stands up right under her chin.

JEN

She'll look a right angel, she will!

BELINDA

And Peter will look ever so handsome in his new suit.

WILLIAM

She looks like an angel!

TUCKER

Ooooh, handsome Peter!

BELINDA

Boys are such babies, don't you think?

JEN

Yes, they just don't understand grown-up things like weddings and such.

WILLIAM

I don't understand why there has to be a wedding at all – things is fine just the way they are, if you ask me.

The other boys murmur in agreement.

BELINDA

Well, no one asked you. And everyone knows that when people fall in love, they get married!

The other girls nod approvingly.

WILLIAM

Yes, and then they fall **out of love** right quick after the wedding.

The boys howl with laughter. The girls are not amused.

SONG 15: A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING

GIRLS

WHEN THE BRIDE APPEARS, SMILING AND SHY
AT THE END OF THE AISLE
IN HER BEAUTIFUL GOWN
AND THE GROOM STANDS TALL
IN HIS COLLAR AND TIE

BOYS

RIGHT ON THE EDGE
OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN!

GIRLS

WE LOVE A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING
WITH FLOWERS IN BLOOM AND A TENOR WHO SINGS

SOON DOWN THE AISLE WE'LL BE TREADING
STREWING ROSE PETALS AND BEARING THE RINGS

GIRLS

WHEN THE VOICE OF THE VICAR IS HEARD,
SAYING "DEARLY BELOVED,
WE ARE GATHERED TODAY"
WE GET MISTY-EYED
AND OUR VISION IS BLURRED

BOYS

WE GET TWITCHY AND SEARCH FOR A QUICK
GETAWAY!

WE HATE A "BEAUTIFUL WEDDING"
WE HAVE TO DRESS UP AND THEN LINE UP IN PAIRS
THEN COMES THE MOMENT WE'RE DREADING
WHEN WE MARCH UP THE AISLE AND EVERYONE STARES

GIRLS

IN A LACE FICHU AND A TAFFETA DRESS
WEARING SHINY NEW SHOES
AND A BOW IN OUR HAIR
WE'LL STAND WITH THE PAIR
AS THEIR VOWS THEY PROFESS

BOYS

AND WE'LL WATCH THE POOR BLOKE AS HE
SINKS IN DISPAIR

GIRLS

THEN THE MUSIC PLAYS AS THEY WALK UP THE AISLE
AND FRIENDS SHAKE HIS HAND
AND THEY ALL KISS THE BRIDE
SHE HOLDS HIS HAND WITH A RADIANT SMILE

BOYS

WHILE HE SECRETLY LOOKS
FOR A GOOD PLACE TO HIDE!

GIRLS

WE LOVE A BEAUTIFUL WEDDING
WITH FLOWERS IN BLOOM AND
A TENOR WHO SINGS
SOON DOWN THE AISLE WE'LL
BE TREADING
STREWING ROSE PETALS AND
BEARING THE RINGS

BOYS

WE HATE A "BEAUTIFUL WEDDING"
WE HAVE TO DRESS UP AND THEN
LINE UP IN PAIRS
THEN COMES THE MOMENT
WE'RE DREADING
WHEN WE MARCH UP THE AISLE
AND EVERYONE STARES

During the final refrain, MRS. CRATCHIT and MRS. WATSON enter and approach the group. CRENSHAW and BRADDOCK enter, opposite.

MRS WATSON
Children! What is going on here?
Whatever are you arguing about?
How did you get in such a state?

MRS CRATCHIT
William! Tim! Belinda!
Stop behaving like ruffians
Or I'll send you home right now!

BELINDA

Those boys are being beastly about the wedding, Mama! I don't think they should be allowed to be in it at all!

WILLIAM

Who wants to be in your blinkin' wedding anyway!

The other boys agree loudly.

TIM

I do.

LIZ

See, Tim does!

CONNOR

That's because Tim's only a baby.

TIM

I am not either a baby! You take that back!!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Timothy Cratchit! If you start a fight, you'll be eating your supper standing up tonight, I promise you!

MRS. WATSON

(To the urchins) I want you all to think about how much Nell does for you. *(To the Cratchit children)* And Peter has been a first-rate big brother, hasn't he? You don't want to ruin their day by fighting about it, do you?

The children mutter their agreement.

MRS. WATSON

That's better. Now run along and enjoy the fair.

The girls and boys exit in different directions with some parting shots, tongues stuck out, etc.

CRENSHAW

Ah, Braddock, I see Mrs. Watson across the square. The perfect opportunity to deliver the sad news about her mortgage, don't you think?

BRADDOCK

Don't we usually handle that discreetly, by private messenger, sir?

CRENSHAW

No, you don't think, do you? (*Patiently, as if to a moron*) In this case, we will derive maximum advantage by delivering the information as publicly as possible.

MRS. WATSON

Oh dear. (*Smiling*) I suppose that's the best we can hope for at that age.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I'm sure you're right, dearie. But don't worry, they'll grow out of it someday. Oh, there's that Mr. Crenshaw. Seems as if he's looking for you.

MRS. WATSON

Good day, Mr. Crenshaw. I hope you're enjoying all the festivities.

CRENSHAW

Ah, Mrs. Watson. No, dear lady, I cannot enjoy myself when I have such unhappy tidings to bring you.

MRS. WATSON

Why, what's wrong sir?

CRENSHAW

I am much afraid, ma'am, that the extension I had intended, indeed, been happy to make, to the term of your mortgage will not now be possible.

MRS. WATSON

How is this, Mr. Crenshaw? I thought I had your word on it.

Her distress draws the crowd's attention.

CRENSHAW

Indeed you did, Ma'am, but I have been forced by a matter of business to sign over your mortgage to another holder, and I find that he is not inclined to honor my word. I am powerless to compel him.

MRS. WATSON

But this is dreadful! I won't be able to meet the original due date, and the children and I will be without a place to live!

CRENSHAW

Indeed I am sorry, Ma'am. If there were any way I could have averted this disaster, I would certainly have done so. But Mr. Scrooge...

MRS, WATSON

Mr. Scrooge!?

CRENSHAW

Yes. I'm afraid I misjudged how he would deal with you. His reputation in previous years was that of a sharp business dealer. But recently, I had heard that he'd become more...generous.

MRS. WATSON

Yes, I had heard the same thing.

CRENSHAW

Apparently, he plans to demolish the house and build a new office building – named for himself. I'm afraid the prospect of such a large gain - and of building a monument to his own business success – is irresistible to him.

TIM

I don't believe it! He's been too nice to me. Mr. Scrooge is a good man!

CRENSHAW

I'm sorry to disillusion you, my young friend, but it is true. (*To Mrs. Watson, but loudly enough to be sure everyone around hears*) Mr. Scrooge has commissioned me to execute the eviction. I shall, of course, wait until the last possible moment before doing so.

MRS. WATSON

Thank you for your warning of what's to come, Mr. Crenshaw. I am sure you did all you could.

CRENSHAW

I only wish I could have done more, Mrs. Watson. I believe he plans to move quickly on this, and I wish you all good fortune in making other arrangements for yourself and your daughter.

MRS. WATSON

I'm not worried for us, Mr. Crenshaw. But what of these children?

CRENSHAW

The...uh...children in your charge will, I'm afraid, have to go to the workhouse or else back into the streets. I cannot tell you how much I regret this, ma'am. If only I could have convinced Scrooge to honor his first assurances to me! Ah, well...

CRENSHAW exits, shaking his head sadly.

BRADDOCK, after a moment, follows him off.

PETER

I knew it wouldn't last!

CRATCHIT

This is hard to understand. It seemed as if Mr. Scrooge's new ways had taken such firm root that nothing would change them.

PETER

If this is true, I won't be a part of his firm any more. Even if I have to go back to the foundry!

CRATCHIT

For now, our first concern must be for Mrs. Watson and her charges.

MRS. WATSON

We'll contrive somehow, Mr. Cratchit. (*To the urchins*) Come along, children, it's time to go home. I must think about what's best to do. Perhaps I can find some way to pay off the mortgage by the due date. Surely the Benevolent Society will help us.

MRS. WATSON exits, accompanied by the CRATCHITS and the URCHINS.

MAN 1

You can be sure I'll be removing my custom from Mr. Scrooge's firm.

MAN 2

Mine as well. If you can't trust a man to deal fairly with such as Mrs. Watson, how can you trust him at all?

MAN 1

There are more than a few men of business who need to know about this.

MAN 2

I'll be calling on my friends in the City come Monday morning. We may not be able to stop this eviction, but if we all act together, we can put him out of business.

MAN 1

We don't want a scoundrel like Scrooge in our community, that's for sure!

TIM

I still don't believe it!

ANDY (*to Tim*)

You're right - something's fishy about this.

AMELIA

Will we have to go back to the streets, Andy?

ANDY

Don't fret yourself, Melie. No matter what, we'll be together and I'll take care of you.

TIM

I just won't believe that Mr. Scrooge will do a thing like this. He's my friend!

ANDY

(To Tim) I'm going to get to the bottom of this somehow.

Lights fade as the crowd begins to disperse and scene change music rises.

Scene 2

Music fades. Split scene, Scrooge's office and Mrs. Watson's parlor, later that day. Lights up on SCROOGE, at his desk, staring at the mortgage paper. BOB, MRS. CRATCHIT, MARTHA, PETER and NELL are in the parlor. TIM enters office.

TIM

Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Tim. Is your father with you?

TIM

No, sir. I came by myself to see you.

SCROOGE

Well, you should go on home right now. Your Mother will be worried about you.

TIM

Mum and Dad are at Mrs. Watson's. I came because I have to talk to you!

SCROOGE

Because I didn't come to the fair? I'm sorry, but I wasn't feeling very festive today after all. And I don't feel much like talking now, either.

TIM

No sir, it wasn't that.

Lights crossfade to NELL and the CRATCHITS in the Watson parlor. MRS. WATSON enters, dejected, and removes her coat and hat.

MRS. WATSON

The Benevolent Society simply doesn't have the money now to redeem the mortgage, and there's no way I can provide for these children once the house is lost – there's just not enough.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Come in and sit down, dearie. You're chilled to the bone. *(Pause)* You know we'd help if we could, but even with Bob's new wages, there's only enough for our own children.

CRATCHIT

Perhaps we could help a little, my dear. There are always ways to make do with less.

MARTHA

Madame Celeste might let me do some extra work on my day off. Many ladies are willing to pay a bit to have their old bonnets re-trimmed.

PETER

You forget, Father, that you're dealing with the old Scrooge. *(Bitterly)* I'm going to resign my position on Monday, and he'll probably cut your salary and expect you to do all the work again!

MRS CRATCHIT

Come on then, at least we can have a nice tea today. The children will be nippish by now.

MRS. WATSON

I really should begin packing my things up...

MRS. CRATCHIT

Time enough for that later. Not even Scrooge can throw you out before the payment is due. Come along now, and show me where the things are in your kitchen. Martha and Bob, you come too – you can help.

The CRATCHITS and MRS. WATSON exit into the kitchen, leaving NELL and PETER. Cross fade to office. ANDY and AMELIA enter.

ANDY

Gov'nor, we've got to talk.

SCROOGE

Do we now! Why? Are you out of material for your imitations?

ANDY

What you talking about, Gov'nor? *(Sees Tim)* Hello, Nipper. What you doing here?

TIM

I had to see Mr. Scrooge and tell him he can't do it!

SCROOGE

And just what, exactly, may I not do?

ANDY

Mr. Crenshaw says you're going to tear down our house and put up a great office building.

TIM

He says you're going to call it Scrooge Hall, or something like that.

SCROOGE

Tim, you're too young to understand the ways of business. (*To Andy*) I don't believe we have anything more to say to one another. Please leave now – and never come back.

ANDY

What's going on here, anyway? I thought we was friends!

SCROOGE

So did I! But now I know that you've been laughing at me all along, taking advantage of me because I was "a right soft touch" – isn't that how you put it?

ANDY

Put it? When would I...

SCROOGE

Don't bother! I know all about your imitations of old Scrooge and his pitiful attempts to be a better person.

ANDY

What are you talking about? Everyone...

SCROOGE

And I know what everyone is doing – they're laughing at me behind my back while they're pretending to be my friends! Getting their jollies at my expense.

ANDY

That's not true! They're only worried about you taking the house from Missus Watson, that's all! They'll hate you if you do that.

SCROOGE

Let them worry! It seems that respect is the only thing I can hope to earn from my "friends". And if hatred comes with respect, so be it. The property will be torn down, and nothing you can say will change my mind.

Crossfade to Watson parlor. PETER and NELL.

PETER

Nell, my darling. (*Steeling himself*) I must ask you to release me from our engagement. Even if the foundry will have me back, my wages there will not be enough to support a wife and family, and I cannot ask you to share such a bleak future.

NELL

If it were only that we should be poor together, I would never release you! But I must stay with Mother now. She'll need me in so many ways. I can't leave her.

PETER

I know. And if things go the way I fear they will at Scrooge and Marley, my parents will need what little I can bring home to provide for my brothers and sisters.

SONG 16: YOU WILL ALWAYS HOLD MY HEART

PETER

ALL MY HOPES HAVE BEEN DENIED ME
I MUST GO MY SEPARATE WAY
BUT YOU'LL ALWAYS LIVE INSIDE ME
AND MY LOVE WILL NEVER STRAY

THOUGH OUR PATHS MUST BE DIVIDED
AND OUR DAYS LIVED OUT APART
I WILL ALWAYS HOLD YOUR MEM'RY
YOU WILL ALWAYS HOLD MY HEART

NELL

BROKEN DREAMS LIE ALL AROUND US
OF THE LIFE WE PLANNED TO LIVE
OTHERS' NEEDS STAND PLAIN BEFORE US
WE MUST GIVE WHAT WE CAN GIVE

BOTH

AS THE YEARS UNFOLD BEFORE US
THOUGH ALL HOPES AND DREAMS DEPART
I WILL ALWAYS HOLD YOUR MEM'RY
YOU WILL ALWAYS HOLD

EVERY DAY I'LL WAKE UP LOVING YOU
EVERY NIGHT, YOU'LL WALK MY DREAMS ANEW
ALL MY LIFE I'LL GIVE MY BEST AND YOU
WILL KNOW IT'S ALL FOR YOU

SHATTERED HOPES AND TATTERED VISIONS
OF A FAMILY OF OUR OWN
AS WE NOW ACCEPT OUR DESTINY
WE WILL LIVE AND LOVE ALONE

THOUGH OUR PATHS MUST BE DIVIDED
AND OUR DAYS LIVED OUT APART
I WILL ALWAYS HOLD YOUR MEM'RY
YOU WILL ALWAYS HOLD

NELL

YOU WILL ALWAYS HOLD

BOTH
YOU WILL ALWAYS HOLD MY HEART

Crossfade back to office.

SCROOGE

Now go away, all of you! I'm a busy man and talking to children isn't a profitable use of my time.

TIM

But you can't do this to your friends...

SCROOGE

Yes, I can, Tim. You'll learn soon enough that friendship is another thing that pays no profits. A man can do very well without friends.

AMELIA

Oh please, Mr. Scrooge! You mustn't take our home away from us! We love Mum Watson so much and... I'm afraid to go back to the old ways.

During this song, SPIRIT enters. She stops to listen to the children sing.

SONG 17: THE HOUSE ON THREADNEEDLE STREET

ANDY

I DON'T LIKE TO BEG SIR, BUT THIS TIME I'LL DO IT
IF YOU PITCH US ALL OUT, AND TEAR DOWN OUR HOME
WE'LL HAVE NOWHERE TO SLEEP,
ONLY ALLEYS TO ROAM
AND SOMEDAY, SIR, I KNOW, I KNOW YOU WILL RUE IT

SCROOGE

You'll be the one who regrets it!

TIM

MR. SCROOGE I HAVE TOLD ALL WHO I KNOW
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN
MRS. WATSON IS MORE THAN A TEACHER, YOU KNOW
SHE'S A MOTHER WHO HELPS
ALL HER CHILDREN TO GROW
AND TO TEAR DOWN HER HOME,
THAT'S NOT A GOOD PLAN

SCROOGE *(Starting to crack)*

I told you, Tim, you're too young to...

ANDY, TIM AND AMELIA

THERE'S A GOOD AND LOVING MOTHER
AND A FAMILY THAT'S COMPLETE
EVERYONE CARES FOR EACH OTHER ONE
IN THE HOUSE ON THREADNEEDLE STREET

ANDY

AT THE MORNING'S FIRST LIGHT
WHEN WE RISE FOR BREAKFAST
PORRIDGE AND COCOA, SO HOT THAT THEY STEAM
AND THE COLD, HUNGRY YEARS
SEEM A SAD, BAD DREAM
SO I'M BEGGING YOU, HELP OUR GOOD DREAM LAST

SCROOGE

(Definitely weakening)

Porridge and cocoa – it takes so little to make them happy.

ANDY

IT'S MUCH MORE THAN A HOUSE, IT'S A HOME

TIM

WHERE THE CANDLES GLOW BRIGHT
IN THE WINDOWS EACH NIGHT

AMELIA

AND THE HEARTHFIRE SURROUNDS US
WITH WARMTH AND LIGHT

ANDY

AND WE KNOW THAT WE'RE SAFE FROM ALL HARM

ANDY, AMELIA AND TIM

THERE'S A MOTHER THERE WHO LOVES US
AND A FAMILY THAT'S COMPLETE
THERE'S A FUTURE SHINING BRIGHT FOR US
IN THE HOUSE ON THREADNEEDLE STREET

SCROOGE

Even if people are laughing at me, what of it?

ANDY

LIZZIE'S READING ON THE BED
CONNOR STANDING ON HIS HEAD
JEN AND TUCKER ARE PLAYING IN THE YARD

TIM

IT'S THE ONLY HOME THEY'VE KNOWN SIR
IT'S A COMFORT, OH SO SWEET

ANDY, AMELIA AND TIM
WE'LL DO ANYTHING YOU ASK, BUT PLEASE
SPARE THE HOUSE ON THREADNEEDLE STREET

*SPIRIT is about to speak, but listens instead, as
Scrooge sings*

SCROOGE

I said you couldn't change my mind, but ... *(To himself)*

SONG 18: RESOLUTIONS (Reprise)

IF I'VE REALLY CHANGED,
NOW THE TIME'S COME TO PROVE IT
WOUNDED FEELINGS AND PRIDE,
CAN I SET THEM ASIDE
IS THERE REALLY A NEW MAN
WHO LIVES DEEP INSIDE
WHO CAN UNLOCK THIS CHAIN AND REMOVE IT

(Instrumental repeats of the "Resolutions" musical phrase)

I WILL NOT BECOME THAT MAN AGAIN,
THE ONE I WAS BEFORE
RESOLUTIONS! *(Instrumental repeat)*
I WILL STAND UP FOR THESE CHILDREN
I WILL DO WHAT'S RIGHT AND MORE

AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH OTHERS LAUGH
NO MATTER HOW THEY MOCK
LET THEM SAY I'M SOFT
MY RESOLUTION'S SOLID AS ROCK
I'VE LEARNED TO KNOW THAT PRIDE AND PROFITS
AREN'T THE SOLUTIONS
A HAPPY LIFE IS MINE IF I JUST KEEP MY RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
I'M A HAPPY MAN WHO HOLDS HIS FRIENDS MORE
PRECIOUS THAN HIS GOLD
RESOLUTIONS! RESOLUTIONS!
IF THAT PUTS ME ON THE 'FOOLISH' LIST
I'M PROUD TO BE ENROLLED

I DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE CHANGED THE FUTURE
IF THESE CHAINS WILL SET ME FREE
BUT I KNOW NOW FOR SURE I HAVE CHANGED
FOR THE BETTER
THE MAN THAT NOW IS ME

SPIRIT smiles and exits.

SCROOGE

And if I'm mocked for being "soft", so be it...

ANDY

Mocked? Who told you that? No one mocks you, Gov'nor.

TIM

Everyone loves you now, Mr. Scrooge. When they see me without my crutch, they say it's you paying for the doctor's care and the medicine that's made me well again.

SCROOGE (*to Andy*)

And I suppose there's no truth to the stories I've heard about you, either?

ANDY

Depends on who you've heard them from, I suppose. There's lots of people will tell you I'm no good, and that used to be true, but you made me believe better of meself. There's lots of people will tell you I'm a thief, and that used to be true, but you and Mum Watson have put me in the way of being an honest man, and so I am now. But there's no one but a liar who can tell you I'm not a true friend, nor has there ever been. I would never serve you such a turn.

SCROOGE

Who I heard them from...Crenshaw... how could I have been so taken in? (*To Andy*) I'm sorry, lad. I should have known better than to have believed him.

ANDY

It's all right, Gov'nor, so long as you believe me now. (*Beat*) And... what about the house, sir?

SCROOGE (*slowly*)

I think now that sitting all alone in a grand building would bring me nothing but torment for the rest of my days.

AMELIA

Does that mean you won't do it?

SCROOGE

Yes, Amelia, that means I won't do it. Your home on Threadneedle Street is safe.

TIM

I knew it! I knew you wouldn't turn them out!

ANDY

But Mr. Crenshaw told everyone at the fair you were going to do it. They're all mad as fire and they say they're going to take all their business away and ruin you!

AMELIA

Mum's at home right now, getting ready to pack up her things, and move out. She tries to hide it, but I know she's been crying and Miss Nell's all upset, too.

SCROOGE

We shall put a stop to that, my dear, never fear!

He moves to his desk and picks up the mortgage document, reading it over quickly.

Yes, it's all in order. I can do as I please with this property, something Mr. Crenshaw perhaps, did not foresee.

He writes something on the face of the mortgage document.

Come along, both of you. We'll put this matter straight, at least with your Mrs. Watson, before we sleep tonight.

They exit as the lights fade and scene change music rises.

Scene 3

Scene change music fades, lights up on Watson parlor, later that evening. The CRATCHITS and MRS. WATSON enter with tea tray.

NELL

(Desperately calm)

Mother, Peter and I have agreed that we shall not suit, and have ended our engagement.

MRS. WATSON

Oh, my dear! I am so very sorry.

MRS. CRATCHIT

There was never a pair as suited as you two – this is all because of that scoundrel...

TIM comes hurrying in.

TIM

Mum! Dad! Everyone! Mr. Scrooge is here! He's come to see Mrs. Watson!

PETER

Scrooge! Come to serve notice, I suppose.

MRS. WATSON

So soon? I cannot see him. tell him I'm not at home...not receiving visitors...anything.

She moves quickly to a dim corner of the room, and turns her back so that SCROOGE, when he enters, cannot see her face until she turns to him.

CRATCHIT

It's too late, I'm afraid.

SCROOGE enters with AMELIA and ANDY. Andy crosses directly to Mrs. Watson.

ANDY

Mum, I've brought Mr. Scrooge to see you.

MRS. WATSON

I can't...I just can't.

ANDY

You must listen to him, Mum. It's only fair.

SCROOGE

Madam... Mrs. Watson... I don't wish to distress you and I will go away immediately, but I must tell you before I go that I have no intention of foreclosing on this property.

Takes the mortgage out of his pocket.

I came here to offer you the mortgage deed, marked 'Paid in Full' as my contribution to the good work you are doing here.

Silence, then everyone speaks at once.

TIM

I told you he wouldn't do it!

CRATCHIT

So you did, Tim.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Heaven be praised!

NELL

Oh sir, thank you! This is so good of you!

MARTHA

Mr. Scrooge! That's a kind thing to do!

ANDY

An' you was right, nipper!

PETER

I don't understand...

NELL

Mother, this is wonderful news. (*Sees that Mrs. Watson is quietly crying*) Why are you sad?

MRS. WATSON

Not sad, my dear. In fact, I'm so very happy to know that my old friend has again become the good and generous person I always knew he could be.

She turns then, and offers her hand to Scrooge, who comes across the room to take it. As he nears her, a look of amazement comes across his face.

Thank you, Ebenezer, from the bottom of my heart.

SCROOGE

Is it... is it really you, Belle?

MRS. WATSON

Yes, my dear friend. Did you have no idea?

SCROOGE

None. I only knew that Andy and his little troupe have come to love you. Oh, Belle! After all these years!

NELL

Excuse me, Mr. Scrooge, but we heard that you planned to build an office building named for yourself here.

SCROOGE

It seems my friend Crenshaw has been busy.

MRS. WATSON

Then there was no truth to the rumor he spread?

SCROOGE

How I wish I could say yes to that question, Belle! But the truth is that I was terribly tempted to fall back to my old ways. Not a very noble soul after all...

MRS. WATSON

Tempted, but not overcome...

SCROOGE

No, I was rescued, first by thinking of the children. Then these three rascals cornered me in my office and told me that I couldn't "do it". And then, the example of your good work... Yes, a great many parties conspired to save me from my own weakness.

MRS. WATSON

I think, perhaps, that you saved yourself by listening to your better nature. Oh, Ebenezer, it's so good to know that we're walking the same pathways again after so many years.

PETER

Nell, perhaps we can reconsider our decision?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Indeed!

SCROOGE

What's this? What decision?

NELL

Oh nothing, really nothing. Before you arrived, we were just... *(She doesn't want to hurt Scrooge's feelings, so she's making this up as she goes along)* discussing who should give the bride away, and we were thinking of Mr. Cratchit, but Mrs. Cratchit says she won't be able to get through the ceremony without crying if he's not by her side, and you're a friend of Mother's and you've been good to Peter and Andy and so...sir...if you'd be so kind, would you do it?

SCROOGE

(Overcome) Belle? *(Mrs. Watson nods, smiling)* I would be deeply honored, Miss Watson.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Good, that's all settled. Now, let's get these little ones home and into bed. It's been a long day, and we all need to get our proper rest. And you, Nell, come with us a while. Martha wants to be sure the veil she's making is just the right length. Peter will walk you home later.

SCROOGE

I'll catch up in a moment and walk along with you if you don't mind, Bob.

CRATCHIT

You're more than welcome, sir.

The next lines are said while the group exits.

PETER

Mr. Scrooge...sir...I want to apologize. I believed you had returned to your old ways. I didn't believe you could change. But you have.

SCROOGE

Well, lad, I don't want to think about how nearly right you were, so let's not dwell on it any more, eh?

PETER

All right, sir. Thank you. *(To Mrs. Watson)* Good night, Ma'am. *(He exits.)*

MRS. WATSON

Good night, Peter. God Bless. *(To Scrooge)* That was a good thing you did just now, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

Nonsense. I couldn't have the boy moping all over the office because he thought he'd hurt my feelings.

MRS. WATSON

Indeed. I've a notion that you like thanks as little as you like apologies, but you will just have to bear it this time. (*Formally, but with a smile*) Thank you, Mr. Scrooge, on behalf of me and my children, for your very generous deed.

SCROOGE

Please, not "Mr. Scrooge". (*Smiling*) I will be so happy if you will continue to call me "Ebenezer." (*Beat*) You are the only one who ever did, you know.

SONG 19: I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S YOU

SCROOGE

TEARS IN MY EYES, JOY IN MY HEART
THINKING OF YEARS THAT WERE WASTED APART
YEARS SPENT IN BITTERNESS, LONELINESS AND THEN
OUT OF NOWHERE, YOU ARE HERE WITH ME
ONCE AGAIN

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S YOU
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S YOU
THE LOVELY, PRECIOUS DREAM I DID NOT DARE TO
DREAM HAS SUDDENLY COME TRUE

THE MEM'RY OF THAT DAY
AGAIN I HEAR YOU SAY
YOU LOVED THE MAN THAT WAS
MY CHANGING WAS THE CAUSE
THAT MADE YOU TURN AWAY.

MRS, WATSON

REGRET IS FOR THE WEAK
FOR SOULS WHO NEVER SEEK
TO SERVE A HIGHER CAUSE
TO MEND THEIR HUMAN FLAWS
TO SCALE A HIGHER PEAK

AND NOW YOU'VE COME AGAIN
REMINING ME OF WHEN
OUR TWO HEARTS BEAT AS ONE
OUR LIVES HAD JUST BEGUN
LET'S JUST REMEMBER THEN

SCROOGE

IT LIFTS MY HEART TO SEE YOU SMILE

AND SAY MY NAME!

BOTH

AND NOW THAT FATE HAS TAKEN A HAND AGAIN
AND BROUGHT US TOGETHER REMEMBERING WHEN
WHEN WE HAD YOUTH AND HOPE AND JOY
TOGETHER WE WOULD SHARE
LIFE'S SWEETEST HOURS

SCROOGE

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S YOU

MRS. WATSON

I'M THANKFUL THAT IT'S TRUE

BOTH

PERHAPS THERE LIES A PATH BEYOND
THE YEARS THAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH

BOTH

WITH YOU
WITH YOU
WITH YOU

Scene 4

Later the same evening, street scene. The Christmas fair is ending. SCROOGE, ANDY, NELL and the CRATCHITS enter. The crowd recognizes Scrooge and reacts. CRENSHAW and BRADDOCK enter.

MAN 1

Well, well, look who we've got here. Mr. Scrooge, evictor of widows and orphans.

WOMAN 1

Merry Christmas, Mrs. Watson – now you and your brats – get out!

SCROOGE

My friends, there's been a misunderstanding...

WOMAN 2

Oh yes, we know all about it. Mr. Crenshaw had a misunderstanding that you wouldn't foreclose on the Widow Watson's mortgage. But he was wrong, wasn't he, mate?

SCROOGE

Truly, you aren't aware of...

MAN 2

We're aware of plenty, you old skinflint! We don't need you talking to us, trying to come 'round us again.

CRENSHAW (*aside, to Braddock*)

It's going very Well, don't you think, Henry?

SONG 20: SCROOGE'S STOOGES

ENSEMBLE

SURE YOU TOLD US THAT YOU'D CHANGED
AND WE FOOLISHLY BELIEVED YOU
AND WHEN WE WERE ALL DECEIVED YOU
STARTED BREAKING YOUR NEW RULES

ONCE WE THOUGHT YOU WERE A HERO
WE ACCEPTED YOU AS ONE OF US
AND AS SOON AS YOU'D EARNED OUR TRUST
YOU PLAYED US ALL FOR FOOLS

WE WERE SCROOGE'S STOOGES
BUT NOW WE'RE ALL ONTO HIS TRICKS
HE'S THROWN THE WIDOW AND HER CHICKS
OUTSIDE INTO THE COLD, OH

WE WERE SCROOGE'S STOOGES
BUT NOW HE'S MADE US FURIOUS
BEHAVIOR SO INGLORIOUS
DESERVES MORE THAN A SCOLD

CRATCHIT

It isn't true!! You must listen to us – Mr. Scrooge isn't foreclosing on the mortgage!

TIM

He's a good man, Mr. Scrooge!

ANDY

He's even give the house to Missus Watson free and clear!

The crowd, unsure of itself, turns to CRENSHAW.

MAN 2

Didn't you tell us he's going to tear the building down?

CRENSHAW

I can only tell you what he said to me, friends. And here is the eviction notice I was commissioned to execute...

MAN 1

Let me see that paper! (*He looks over the paper*) Yes, that's Scrooge's signature all right. I've seen it on many a document this year, but never on so heartless a one as this!

SCROOGE

I signed no eviction notice.

MAN 1

Here's the paper, Scrooge. And it's your signature, I'll take my oath on it.

CRATCHIT

I have seen the cancelled mortgage with *my* own eyes.

The crowd again turns to CRENSHAW.

CRENSHAW

Mr. Cratchit, of course, knows Mr. Scrooge much better than I – but then, he has his livelihood to protect, doesn't he. I wonder how reliable his testimony is...

WOMAN 3

(*Indicates Tim*) And that little tyke would say anything to help his dad!

MAN 3

(*Indicates Andy*) And that young rascal there used to come 'round me shop and steal bread every bleedin' day!

CRENSHAW

(*Piously*) You see Henry, how the sins of our past come to haunt us. No one believes a word that comes out of that brat's mouth.

MAN 2

(*Waves eviction notice*) Here's the proof of who's telling the truth!

ENSMBLE

YOU ASSURED US, YOU IMploRED US
TO BELIEVE YOUR CHANGE OF HEART
SAID YOU'D LEARNED IMPORTANT LESSONS
SAID YOU'D MADE A BRAND NEW START

BUT NO MORE SCROOGE'S STOOGES
HE'S TIED OUR KNICKERS IN A KNOT
UNDER OUR COLLARS, WE'RE ALL HOT
WE'RE SPOILING FOR A ROW

There is an instrumental interlude and some generalized shouting back and forth between the Scrooge supporters and the crowd. Then:

NO MORE SCROOGE'S STOOGES
WE'LL MAKE THE MISER PAY TODAY
NOW THAT WE'VE SEEN HIS FEET OF CLAY
WE'LL GET HIM BACK SOME HOW, OH

NO MORE SCROOGE'S STOOGES
WE WILL NOT GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE
TO LEAD US IN ANOTHER DANCE
LET'S GET THE ROTTER NOW! NOW!

CRENSHAW

Just a moment, Friends. Perhaps I can offer a solution to this problem.

SCROOGE

There is no problem, sir. I have already signed the house over to Mrs. Watson.

CRENSHAW

If only it were that simple. Now, I am sure you, clever businessman that you are, read the contract we entered into yesterday before you signed it, but perhaps some of the finer print escaped your notice.

SCROOGE

What do you mean?

Crenshaw produces the contract and opens it to the last page.

CRENSHAW

You see, here in paragraph 17, sub-paragraph d, on the last page, just above your signature. "Notwithstanding any other terms in this contract, neither of the parties to this transaction may, without the written consent of the other party dispose of the property being transferred without the mortgage being satisfied in full by the mortgagee."

SCROOGE

I certainly don't remember this clause. But it is there, and I was...distracted. And that is my signature, I don't deny it.

WOMAN 1

What does that mean, all that legal jibberish?

CRENSHAW

It means that Mr. Scrooge can't give the house to Mrs. Watson without my written consent unless she pays off the mortgage.

NELL

But Mr. Crenshaw, you said you were willing to help us – just give Mr. Scrooge your consent.

CRENSHAW

This has now become a business transaction, my dear, and any vague charitable impulse I may have had must yield to the opportunity for profit. I can still save your house, but Mr. Scrooge will have to pay a price for my cooperation.

SCROOGE

What do you mean, a price?

Crenshaw produces a second legal document.

CRENSHAW

Sign this new contract, and I shall immediately sign over the house to Mrs. Watson free of any obligation to repay the mortgage loan.

SCROOGE

But the mortgage belongs to me – how can you forgive it?

CRENSHAW

Once you sign this document, all of your current business holdings will belong to me.

There is a moment's stunned silence as the implications of this statement sink in for Scrooge and everyone around him. Off to one side, BRADDOCK speaks, as if to himself.

BRADDOCK

This is not right!

MR. HIGGINS

This is what Crenshaw did to me – took my business, took my livelihood, everything.

CRENSHAW

It was business, Higgins, nothing personal.

SCROOGE

But this is personal, isn't it, Nigel?

CRENSHAW

I have always found virtue a bit...boring, and it was annoying to hear everyone sing your praises this past year while your business prospered and mine suffered. So yes, I do feel a certain satisfaction in outwitting you in particular, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

And what will happen to my business? What about Scrooge & Marley?

CRENSHAW

Don't you see, Ebenezer? There will be no more Scrooge & Marley.

SCROOGE

And if I refuse?

CRENSHAW

Then there will be no more house on Threadneedle Street. I will take you to court and demand the return of the property. I will win, you know – the contract is iron-clad. I will call in the mortgage, then foreclose and follow through on your excellent original plan – except that the new building will be – the Crenshaw Building.

SCROOGE

My business. All the years of work. The plans for Bob and Peter to inherit. Everything.

CRENSHAW

A simple choice, Ebenezer. Your business or their home.

SCROOGE

Bob, Peter, Nell. If I do this thing, all of your plans for the future will be affected, too. I can start over, but what will happen to you?

CRATCHIT

But if you don't do it, the children will be back on the streets again. Charlotte and I could never be happy knowing that.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Never.

NELL

And it will break Mum's heart. We all know what will happen to them, with no home and no one to love them.

SCROOGE

But what of your plans to marry? If I can't employ you, Peter, what will come of them?

NELL

If you have the courage to start over, Mr. Scrooge, then Peter and I can follow your example. We'll marry as we've planned, and work with you to rebuild.

PETER

You must do it, sir. The children need a home and a mother. If you are ready to give up your business for them, we're with you. (*Extends his hand to Scrooge*) And if we work together, we can build a new dream for all of us.

SONG 21: PASSING IT ON (Reprise)

PETER:

WE'LL BUILD ON AN HONEST FOUNDATION

NELL:

WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE OUR FUTURE BRIGHT

CRATCHIT:
STARTING OVER WITH JUST OUR REPUTATION

SCROOGE:
BUILD A BUSINESS THAT'S KNOWN FOR DOING THINGS
RIGHT

ALL:
PASSING ON WHAT WE'VE LEARNED
OF WHAT MAKES A LIFE WORTHWHILE

SCROOGE:
IT'S A THOUGHT THAT MAKES ME SMILE
AS I IMAGINE YOU AND YOUR SON, PASSING IT ON

SCROOGE

Together. Yes, together, we can do anything, can't we? You are the best of friends!

CRENSHAW

All this is very affecting, I'm sure, but it is cold, and my patience is growing thin. Your decision, Scrooge?

SCROOGE

All right, Crenshaw, I'll sign your document. Give it to me.

CRENSHAW

With pleasure.

Suddenly, BRADDOCK speaks.

BRADDOCK

No! Don't sign it, Mr. Scrooge! Everyone, listen to me!

CRENSHAW

Henry...

SCROOGE

I appreciate your sympathy, Mr. Braddock, but I must sign.

CRENSHAW

Think very carefully about what you are about to do. You are an accomplice, you know.

BRADDOCK

If you sign that paper, Mr. Scrooge, it will be the only authentic signature among all those you've seen today.

MR. HIGGINS

What do you mean?

BRADDOCK

Mr. Scrooge's signature is a forgery, traced over his signature on a new last page of the contract. The final item, paragraph 17d, was added after he had signed the original.

WOMAN 1

How d'you know so much about it?

BRADDOCK

This was all planned by my employer...

CRENSHAW

Former employer...

BRADDOCK

(Takes a deep breath)

...Former employer, Mr. Crenshaw, to discredit Mr. Scrooge. But I helped him to do it – I don't deny that.

CRENSHAW

I think that's enough, Henry.

BRADDOCK

No, it's not. Crenshaw was going to foreclose on Mrs. Watson himself. Then, he decided to use her and her little ones to make Scrooge look bad, so he lied to her – told her he would extend her payment date.

The crowd begins to turn on CRENSHAW.

BRADDOCK

And he lied to Mr. Scrooge to make him angry – told him all his friends were really laughing at him for being nice. Then he used the carbonated paper to forge Mr. Scrooge's signature on the eviction notice, too. It was all lies. All of it.

CRENSHAW

I can see that this round goes to you, Ebenezer. Another time, perhaps the outcome will be different. *(To Braddock)* There is no need, Henry, for you to come to the office for your things. I'll have them delivered to your lodgings. And there will, of course, be no letter of reference.

CRENSHAW starts to exit, but is intercepted by the CONSTABLE. During the next beat, PETER and NELL exit without drawing attention to themselves.

CONSTABLE

Excuse me, Mr. Crenshaw, but I believe there's a bit of business to be done between you and Her Majesty's courts of justice.

CRENSHAW

I beg your pardon!?

CONSTABLE

If you'll just accompany me without any fuss, there won't be no need to put the handcuffs on you here in front of everybody now, will there.

CRENSHAW

Handcuffs? My good man, what are you talking about? Out of my way!

CONSTABLE

All right, then!

The CONSTABLE catches CRENSHAW by the arm, putting the handcuffs on him.

CRENSHAW

Unhand me, you cretin!

CONSTABLE

Now, now, sir. No fuss, if you please, or we'll be having to add a charge of resisting arrest.

CRENSHAW

You'll pay for this, you...

CONSTABLE

Well, it's plain that someone will be paying for something, but I'm fair certain it won't be me. Come along now. *(To Braddock)* You'll have to come too, sir, to make your statement to the magistrate.

BRADDOCK

You mean I'm not to be arrested?

CONSTABLE

It's not for me to say about that, but it shouldn't be too hard for the lawyers to sort out who was really behind this faradiddle.

CRENSHAW is led off as the crowd cheers.

WOMAN 3

Mr. Scrooge, we're right sorry we was took in by that Crenshaw bloke.

SCROOGE

It is easy to forgive you all for that, since I was very nearly "took in" by him myself. We must all learn a lesson from this – trust your friends, and do not easily believe ill of them.

MAN 2

You know, Scrooge, you could seek damages from Crenshaw for what he tried to do to you.

SCROOGE

I think not, friend. I know the chain he is forging for himself. He will find out too late how heavy it is, and he will carry the weight of it forever.

MRS. CRATCHIT

All right now, that's settled, so for heaven's sake, let's all go home!

The crowd exits, Andy and Tim shake hands.

ANDY (to Tim)

I guess we gave them what-for, eh, nipper?

TIM

Indeed we did. We won't be having any more trouble with *those* blokes!

Light fade, and we hear organ music – Pachelbel's "Canon in D"- which continues to play under the following dialogue. Lights rise on one area of the stage. Peter and Nell stand facing each other in front of the Vicar

VICAR

Dearly Beloved, we are gathered...

Music rises, lights fade, then music fades and lights rise again.

PETER

I, Peter Cratchit, take thee, Nell Watson...

Music rises, lights fade, then music fades and lights rise again.

NELL

I, Nell Watson, take thee, Peter Cratchit...

Music rises, lights fade, then music fades and lights rise again.

VICAR

I now pronounce you man and wife.

Music morphs to Mendelsohn's "Wedding March", then to church bells ringing, then to scene change music. During this scene change, we hear Bob Cratchit's voice reading from "A Visit From Saint Nicholas".

CRATCHIT

And laying his finger aside of his nose
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprung to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew, like the down of a thistle:

Scene 5

Scene change music fades, lights rise on the Watson parlor. Christmas Eve, after the wedding. MRS. WATSON, SCROOGE, MRS. CRATCHIT, and the CHILDREN are all listening to BOB CRATCHIT as he reads. PETER and NELL are in a honeymoon haze. Scrooge and Mrs. Watson sit together. The ENSEMBLE are the wedding guests.

CRATCHIT

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, “*Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!*”

Everyone applauds Bob’s reading.

MRS. WATSON

What an excellent reading, Mr. Cratchit! You truly capture the spirit of Mr. Moore’s new poem.

AMELIA

Mr. Scrooge, tell us again about the ghosts that visited you last Christmas.

SCROOGE

You don’t want to hear that old tale again.

TIM

Yes we do, ‘cause it’s the story of how you became our friend.

All the children gather round Scrooge, urging him to tell the story.

SCROOGE

All right, just one more time then. (*He waits till the children are all seated on the floor near his chair.*) Marley was dead to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker and (*indicating himself*) the chief mourner. I signed it. And my name was good upon ‘Change for anything I chose to put my hand to. Old Marley was dead as a doornail.

The children react with gleeful horror to the idea of dead Marley. SCROOGE’s voice fades and the scene freezes as SPIRIT enters.

SPIRIT

Ebenezer. Ebenezer Scrooge!

SCROOGE comes out of the freeze.

SCROOGE

What? Who’s calling me?

SCROOGE crosses to SPIRIT. As he moves, we hear the sound of a heavy chain being dragged across the floor. He is startled, and reacts with fear.

SPIRIT

I am the Spirit of Christmas Forever.

SCROOGE

Another Spirit! I am afraid to hear what you have to tell me.

He starts to move away from SPIRIT, but stops when the sound of the chain is heard again.

Is that the chain that I forged in all the years before this one? Are you come to tell me that I must carry it into eternity? And what of Tim? Please don't tell me that he must die. He's such a good little fellow.

He moves back toward SPIRIT— the sound of the chain comes again.

I think I can bear anything if only you'll tell me Tim gets well and has a long, happy life.

SPIRIT

Peace, Ebenezer. Yes, that is the sound of your chain, and I am sent to tell you that, because of how you have changed this past year, the chain is undone.

The sound of the chain hitting the floor. SCROOGE takes a few steps. Silence. A few more steps. Still silence. A broad smile crosses his face, then fades.

SCROOGE

And Tim?

SPIRIT

Tim Cratchit will grow to be a strong, healthy man, marry and raise a fine family. He will be among those who remember you most fondly.

SCROOGE

Thanks are too little return for the good news you bring me, but I do thank you, Spirit, and I will always keep Christmas in my heart all the year round.

SPIRIT

You have learned the secret of Christmas Forever, Ebenezer. Remember it well

SONG 22: FOR CHRISTMAS, FOREVER

FIRELIGHT AND CANDLE GLOW
HOLLY AND MISTLETOE
SLEIGH BELLS AND DRIFTING SNOW
ARE NEW TO US EACH DECEMBER

CAROLS AND CANDY CANES
TINSEL AND PAPER CHAINS
ANGELS AND MODEL TRAINS
ALL CALL ON US TO REMEMBER

BUT THESE ARE JUST THE TRAPPINGS
THE LOVELY BOWS AND SHINY WRAPPINGS
THEY'RE JUST A PART OF CHRISTMAS
THEY'RE NOT THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS

FOR CHRISTMAS, FOREVER
DEPENDS ON ME AND YOU
IT'S UP TO EACH ONE OF US
TO KEEP THE MESSAGE SHINING THROUGH
IF YOU WANT CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY
THERE'S JUST ONE PLACE IT CAN START
FOR CHRISTMAS, FOREVER, YOU MUST
HOLD CHRISTMAS ALWAYS IN YOUR HEART

LOVE AND GOOD CHEER TO SHARE
FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO CARE
KEEPING US ALL AWARE
THESE ARE THE GOLDEN WHOLE OF CHRISTMAS

GOOD WILL AND PEACE TO ALL
EACH YEAR AS WE RECALL
LOVE IN A MANGER STALL
THIS IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF CHRISTMAS

YES, CHRISTMAS, FOREVER
DEPENDS ON ME AND YOU
IT'S UP TO EACH ONE OF US
TO KEEP THE MESSAGE SHINING THROUGH
IF YOU WANT CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY
THERE'S JUST ONE PLACE IT CAN START
FOR CHRISTMAS, FOREVER, YOU MUST
HOLD CHRISTMAS ALWAYS IN YOUR HEART
HOLD CHRISTMAS ALWAYS IN YOUR HEART

SPIRIT

Is there nothing else you wish for, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE

(Beat) Last year, the other spirits visited an unhappy fellow, alone in his cold, dark room. Today, I am surrounded by friends. A long-lost love has come back into my life and, perhaps, given me another chance to win such happiness. There is nothing more I could possibly want for myself. And yet, there is one thing I would ask...

SPIRIT

And what is that?

SCROOGE

All that is good in my life I owe to the visitations of last Christmas Eve. Let Jacob Marley be released from his chain, that his soul may rest in peace for the good deed he did me then.

SPIRIT

Your wish is granted, Ebenezer. Now, go back to your family. They have heard nothing of my visit, but will remember only your storytelling.

Lights cross-fade SCROOGE crosses back,, the scene unfreezes.

SCROOGE

And the bedpost was my own! The bed was my own, the room was my own! And best and happiest of all, the time before me was my own, to make amends in! And so I have, and so I shall continue to do, and my reward will be your friendship and love, and I shall desire no other. *(Everyone cheers. SCROOGE picks up a glass.)* And now, a toast – to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Cratchit.

SONG 23: ACT II FINALE

SCROOGE

TO THE BRIDE, IN ALL HER BEAUTY
TO THE GROOM WHO WON HER HEART
TO THE FAMILIES THAT LOVE THEM
TO YOUR NEW LIFE AT ITS START

ALL:

TO THE DREAMS AND HOPES AND WISHES
THAT YOU DARE TO SHARE AND PURSUE
TRUSTING THAT THE PATH BEFORE YOU
LEADS TO WHERE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE

FOR CHRISTMAS, FOREVER
DEPENDS ON ME AND YOU
IT'S UP TO EACH ONE OF US
TO KEEP THE MESSAGE SHINING THROUGH
IF YOU WANT CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY
THERE'S JUST ONE PLACE IT CAN START
FOR CHRISTMAS, FOREVER

YOU MUST HOLD CHRISTMAS
ALWAYS IN YOUR HEART
HOLD CHRISTMAS ALWAYS IN YOUR HEART

Curtain

Note on Nell's Wedding dress:

Except for the very wealthy, wedding dresses of this era were not “once-in-a-lifetime” dresses. Most women expected to wear their wedding dresses after the wedding, on Sundays and other special occasions. They could be white, ivory, pastel or even a darker color. They could be worn with veils or hats.

Victorian wedding dress examples:

