



BACKGROUND

In mid-nineteenth-century England, millions of peasants moved to the cities. There, they lived in overcrowded slums. Adults and many children worked up to 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. In contrast, factory owners and professionals lived in grand houses with at least one—and often many—servants. These differences in social conditions play a part in *A Christmas Carol*.

Scene 1

1 [Lights. Choral music is sung. Curtain. Scrooge, in bed, sleeping, in spotlight. We cannot yet see the interior of his room. Marley, opposite, in spotlight equal to Scrooge's. Marley laughs. He tosses his hand in the air and a flame shoots from it, magically, into the air. There is a thunder clap, and then another; a lightning flash, and then another. Ghostly music plays under. Colors change. Marley's spotlight has gone out and now reappears, with Marley in it, standing next to the bed and the sleeping Scrooge. Marley addresses the audience directly.]

2 **Marley.** Hear this snoring Scrooge! Sleeping to escape the nightmare that is his waking day. What shall I bring to him now? I'm afraid nothing would astonish old Scrooge now. Not after what he's seen. Not a baby boy, not a rhinoceros, nor anything in between would astonish Ebenezer Scrooge just now. I can think of nothing . . . [Suddenly] that's it! Nothing! [He speaks confidentially.]

READ TO UNLOCK MEANING

1. First read the text for comprehension and enjoyment. Use the **Reading Strategy** and **Comprehension Check** questions to support your first read.
2. Go back and respond to the Close Read notes.
3. Identify other details in the text you find interesting. Ask your own questions and draw your own conclusions.

Pg 251

- Marley is STILL the POV
- Scrooge is waiting for the Ghost Christmas PRESENT
- He is sleeping soundly



Pg 252

- Scrooge thinks he is hallucinating
- Meets Christmas PRESENT
- Christmas Present is joyful and wears a green robe
- He sits on a throne of bounty

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT



I'll have the clock strike one and, when he awakes expecting my second messenger, there will be no one . . . nothing. Then I'll have the bell strike twelve. And then one again . . . and then nothing. Nothing . . . [Laughs] nothing will . . . astonish him. I think it will work.

3 [The bell tolls one. Scrooge leaps awake.]

4 **Scrooge.** One! One! This is it; time! [Looks about the room] Nothing!

5 [The bell tolls midnight.]

6 Midnight! How can this be? I'm sleeping backwards.

7 [One again]

8 Good heavens! One again! I'm sleeping back and forth! [A pause. Scrooge looks about.] Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

9 [Suddenly, thunder and lightning. Marley laughs and disappears. The room shakes and glows. There is suddenly springlike music. Scrooge makes a run for the door.]

10 **Marley.** Scrooge!

11 **Scrooge.** What?

12 **Marley.** Stay you put!

13 **Scrooge.** Just checking to see if anyone is in here.

14 [Lights and thunder again: more music. Marley is of a sudden gone. In his place sits the Ghost of Christmas Present—to be called in the stage directions of the play, Present—center of room. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, are turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, suckling pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum puddings, barrels of oysters, red hot chestnuts, cherry-checked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that make the chamber dim with their delicious steam. Upon this throne sits Present, glorious to see. He bears a torch, shaped as a Horn of Plenty.¹ Scrooge hops out of the door, and then peeks back again into his bedroom. Present calls to Scrooge.]

15 **Present.** Ebenezer Scrooge. Come in, come in! Come in and know me better!

16 **Scrooge.** Hello. How should I call you?

17 **Present.** I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me.

18 [Present is wearing a simple green robe. The walls around the room are now covered in greenery, as well. The room seems to be a perfect grove now: leaves of holly, mistletoe and ivy reflect the stage lights. Suddenly, there is a mighty roar of flame in the fireplace and now the hearth burns

with a lavish, warming fire. There is an ancient scabbard girdling the Ghost's middle, but without sword. The sheath is gone to rust.]

19 You have never seen the like of me before?

20 **Scrooge.** Never.

21 **Present.** You have never walked forth with younger members of my family: my elder brothers born on Christmases past.

22 **Scrooge.** I don't think I have. I'm afraid I've not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

23 **Present.** More than eighteen hundred.

24 **Scrooge.** A tremendous family to provide for! [Present stands] Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and learnt a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

25 **Present.** Touch my robe.

26 [Scrooge walks cautiously to Present and touches his robe. When he does, lightning flashes, thunder claps, music plays. Blackout]

Scene 2

1 [PROLOGUE: Marley stands spotlight, L. He speaks directly to the audience.]

2 **Marley.** My ghostly friend now leads my living partner through the city's streets.

3 [Lights up on Scrooge and Present]

4 See them there and hear the music people make when the weather is severe, as it is now.

5 [Winter music. Choral group behind scrim, sings. When the song is done and the stage is re-set, the lights will fade up on a row of shops, behind the singers. The choral group will hum the song they have just completed now and mill about the streets,² carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops and restaurants. They will, perhaps, sing about being poor at Christmastime, whatever.]

6 **Present.** These revelers, Mr. Scrooge, carry their own dinners to their jobs, where they will work to bake the meals the rich men and women of this city will eat as their Christmas dinners. Generous people these . . . to care for the others, so . . .

Pg 253

- Christmas Present has MANY brothers
- SCENE 2: Scrooge is flying thru the air with PAST
- The SHEATH is rusty - because a sheath is used during wartime



7 [Present walks among the choral group and a sparkling incense³ falls from his torch on to their baskets, as he pulls the covers off of the baskets. Some of the choral group become angry with each other.]

8 **Man #1.** Hey, you, watch where you're going.

9 **Man #2.** Watch it yourself, mate!

10 [Present sprinkles them directly, they change.]

11 **Man #1.** I pray go in ahead of me. It's Christmas. You be first!

12 **Man #2.** No, no. I must insist that YOU be first!

13 **Man #1.** All right, I shall be, and gratefully so.

14 **Man #2.** The pleasure is equally mine, for being able to watch you pass, smiling.

15 **Man #1.** I would find it a shame to quarrel on Christmas Day . . .

16 **Man #2.** As would I.

17 **Man #1.** Merry Christmas then, friend!

18 **Man #2.** And a Merry Christmas straight back to you!

19 [Church bells toll. The choral group enter the buildings: the shops and restaurants; they exit the stage, shutting their doors closed behind them. All sound stops. Scrooge and Present are alone again.]

20 **Scrooge.** What is it you sprinkle from your torch?

21 **Present.** Kindness.

22 **Scrooge.** Do you sprinkle your kindness on any particular people or on all people?

23 **Present.** To any person kindly given. And to the very poor most of all.

24 **Scrooge.** Why to the very poor most?

25 **Present.** Because the very poor need it most. Touch my heart . . . here, Mr. Scrooge. We have another journey.

26 [Scrooge touches the Ghost's heart and music plays, lights change color, lightning flashes, thunder claps. A choral group appears on the street, singing Christmas carols.]

Scene 3

1 [Marley stands spotlighted in front of a scrim on which is painted the exterior of Cratchit's four-roomed house. There is a flash and a clap and Marley is gone. The lights shift color again, the scrim flies away, and we are in the

Pg 254

- Scrooge sees ppl celebrate Christmas - eating, singing, enjoying the season
- “Being poor at Christmas time”
- The poor CARE for the rich during this time
- CP sprinkles the ppl who are arguing with “KINDNESS”
- The 2 ppl who are arguing are now getting along
- **ESPECIALLY to the poor because they need it the most**

STOP: 9:22

SCENE 3: BOB CRATCHIT's house

interior of the Cratchit family home. Scrooge is there, with the spirit (Present), watching Mrs. Cratchit set the table, with the help of Belinda Cratchit and Peter Cratchit, a baby, pokes a fork into the mashed potatoes on his highchair's tray. He also chews on his shirt collar.]

- 2 **Scrooge.** What is this place, Spirit?
- 3 **Present.** This is the home of your employee, Mr. Scrooge. Don't you know it?
- 4 **Scrooge.** Do you mean Cratchit, Spirit? Do you mean this is Cratchit's home?
- 5 **Present.** None other.
- 6 **Scrooge.** These children are his?
- 7 **Present.** There are more to come presently.
- 8 **Scrooge.** On his meager earnings! What foolishness!
- 9 **Present.** Foolishness, is it?
- 10 **Scrooge.** Wouldn't you say so? Fifteen shillings^s a week's what he gets!
- 11 **Present.** I would say that he gets the pleasure of his family, fifteen times a week times the number of hours a day! Wait, Mr. Scrooge. Wait, listen and watch. You might actually learn something . . .
- 12 **Mrs. Cratchit.** What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha warn't as late last Christmas by half an hour!
- 13 [Martha opens the door, speaking to her mother as she does.]
- 14 **Martha.** Here's Martha, now, Mother! [She laughs. The Cratchit Children squeal with delight.]
- 15 **Belinda.** It's Martha, Mother! Here's Martha!
- 16 **Peter.** Marthmama, Marthmama! Hullo!
- 17 **Belinda.** Hurrah! Martha! Martha! There's such an enormous goose for us, Martha!
- 18 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!
- 19 **Martha.** We'd a great deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, Mother.
- 20 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Well, never mind so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!
- 21 **Belinda.** No, no! There's Father coming. Hide, Martha, hide!

Pg 255 SCENE 3: BOB CRATCHIT's house

- They're waiting for their father to return with Tiny Tim
- The family is a happy family, despite being "poor"
- Scrooge has never been to the Cratchit home
- Scrooge is surprised that he has a large family and he makes so little money
- Foolishness to have a large family with such a small wage/pay.



- Cratchits all celebrate the happy season
- Tiny Tim uses crutches - he is a “cripple”
- Tim hopes that ppl see him at church bc he want to remind them that the Lord made lame beggars walk and blind men to see.
- Tiny Tim has an illness that prevents him from walking and full health.

22 [Martha giggles and hides herself.]

23 **Martha.** Where? Here?

24 **Peter.** Hide, hide!

25 **Belinda.** Not there! *THERE!*

26 [Martha is hidden. Bob Cratchit enters, carrying Tiny Tim atop his shoulder. He wears a threadbare and fringeless comforter hanging down in front of him. Tiny Tim carries small crutches and his small legs are bound in an iron frame brace.]

27 **Bob and Tiny Tim.** Merry Christmas.

28 **Bob.** Merry Christmas my love, Merry Christmas Peter, Merry Christmas Belinda. Why, where is Martha?

29 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Not coming.

30 **Bob.** Not coming: Not coming upon Christmas Day?

31 **Martha.** [Pokes head out] Ohhh, poor Father. Don't be disappointed.

32 **Bob.** What's this?

33 **Martha.** 'Tis I!

34 **Bob.** Martha! [They embrace.]

35 **Tiny Tim.** Martha! Martha!

36 **Martha.** Tiny Tim!

37 [Tiny Tim is placed in Martha's arms. Belinda and Peter rush him offstage.]

38 **Belinda.** Come, brother! You must come hear the pudding singing in the copper.

39 **Tiny Tim.** The pudding? What flavor have we?

40 **Peter.** Plum! Plum!

41 **Tiny Tim.** Oh, Mother! I love plum!

42 [The children exit the stage giggling.]

43 **Mrs. Cratchit.** And how did little Tim behave?

44 **Bob.** As good as gold, and even better. Somehow he gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see. [Pauses] He has the oddest ideas sometimes, but he seems all the while to be growing stronger and

more hearty . . . one would never know. *[Hears Tim's crutch on floor outside door]*

45 **Peter.** The goose has arrived to be eaten!

46 **Belinda.** Oh, mama, mama, it's beautiful.

47 **Martha.** It's a perfect goose, Mother!

48 **Tiny Tim.** To this Christmas goose, Mother and Father I say . . . *[Yells]* Hurrah! Hurrah!

49 **Other Children.** *[Copying Tim]* Hurrah! Hurrah!

50 *[The family sits round the table. Bob and Mrs. Cratchit serve the trimmings, quickly. All sit; all bow heads; all pray.]*

51 **Bob.** Thank you, dear Lord, for your many gifts . . . our dear children; our wonderful meal; our love for one another; and the warmth of our small fire—*[Looks up at all]* A merry Christmas to us, my dear. God bless us!

52 **All.** *[Except Tim]* Merry Christmas! God bless us!

53 **Tiny Tim.** *[In a short silence]* God bless us every one.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

What do you think Tiny Tim so!

Pg 257

- They are a thankful family
- Scrooge has concern for Tiny Tim
- CP tells Scrooge that he may not live another Christmas



54 *[All freeze. Spotlight on Present and Scrooge]*

55 **Scrooge.** Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

56 **Present.** I see a vacant seat . . . in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.

57 **Scrooge.** No, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared!

58 **Present.** If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, none other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

59 *[Scrooge bows his head. We hear Bob's voice speak Scrooge's name.]*

60 **Bob.** Mr. Scrooge . . .

61 **Scrooge.** Huh? What's that? Who calls?

62 **Bob.** *[His glass raised in a toast]* I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!

63 **Scrooge.** Me, Bob? You toast *me*?

64 **Present.** Save your breath, Mr. Scrooge. You can't be seen or heard.

65 **Mrs. Cratchit.** The Founder of the Feast, indeed! I wish I had him here, that miser Scrooge. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it!

66 **Bob.** My dear! Christmas Day!

67 **Mrs. Cratchit.** It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge . . .

68 **Scrooge.** Oh. Spirit, must I? . . .

69 **Mrs. Cratchit.** You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!

70 **Bob.** This is Christmas Day, and I should like to drink to the health of the man who employs me and allows me to earn my living and our support and that man is Ebenezer Scrooge . . .

71 **Mrs. Cratchit.** I'll drink to his health for your sake and the day's, but not for his sake . . . a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you, Mr. Scrooge, wherever you may be this day!

72 **Scrooge.** Just here, kind madam . . . out of sight, out of sight . . .

73 **Bob.** Thank you, my dear. Thank you.

74 **Scrooge.** Thank you, Bob . . . and Mrs. Cratchit, too. No one else is toasting me, . . . not now . . . not ever. Of that I am sure . . .

Pg 258

- Scrooge asks about what will happen with Tiny Tim
- CP mocks his words about how “the poor should just die”
- Bob raises a toast to Scrooge - he thankful regardless
- Mrs Cratchit doesn't like Scrooge
- The family recognizes that he is a miser and doesn't pay him a fair wage
- Bob sticks up for Scrooge
- Scrooge overhears how the family really talks about him
- He sees that NO ONE is toasting him

75 **Bob.** Children . . .

76 **All.** Merry Christmas to Mr. Scrooge.

77 **Bob.** I'll pay you sixpence, Tim, for my favorite song.

78 **Tiny Tim.** Oh, Father, I'd so love to sing it, but not for pay. This Christmas goose—this feast—you and Mother, my brother and sisters close with me: that's my pay—

79 **Bob.** Martha, will you play the notes on the lute, for Tiny Tim's song.

80 **Belinda.** May I sing, too, Father?

81 **Bob.** We'll all sing.

82 *[They sing a song about a tiny child lost in the snow—probably from Wordsworth's poem. Tim sings the lead vocal; all chime in for the chorus. Their song fades under, as the Ghost of Christmas Present speaks.]*

83 **Present.** Mark my words, Ebenezer Scrooge. I do not present the Cratchits to you because they are a handsome, or brilliant family. They are not handsome. They are not brilliant. They are not well-dressed, or tasteful to the times. Their shoes are not even waterproofed by virtue of money or cleverness spent. So when the pavement is wet, so are the insides of their shoes and the tops of their toes. These are the Cratchits, Mr. Scrooge. They are not highly special. They are happy, grateful, pleased with one another, contented with the time and how it passes. They don't sing very well, do they? But, nonetheless, they do sing . . . *[Pauses]* think of that, Scrooge. Fifteen shillings a week and they do sing . . . hear their song until its end.

84 **Scrooge.** I am listening. *[The chorus sings full volume now, until . . . the song ends here.]* Spirit, it must be time for us to take our leave. I feel in my heart that it is . . . that I must think on that which I have seen here . . .

85 **Present.** Touch my robe again . . .

86 *[Scrooge touches Present's robe. The lights fade out on the Cratchits, who sit, frozen, at the table. Scrooge and Present in a spotlight now. Thunder, lightning, smoke. They are gone.]*

Pg 259

- CP describes the type of family the Cratchits are - kind, thankful despite their poor state
- Scrooge says “I must think on it ..what has happened here.”
- What are they so happy for?
- Is Scrooge mad that Ms. Cratchit doesn't like him?

STOP:

Scene 4

[Marley appears D.L. in single spotlight. A storm brews. Thunder and lightning. Scrooge and Present “fly” past, U. The storm continues, furiously, and, now and again, Scrooge and Present will zip past in their travels. Marley will speak straight out to the audience.]

- 2 **Marley.** The Ghost of Christmas Present, my co-worker in this attempt to turn a miser, flies about now with that very miser, Scrooge, from street to street, and he points out partygoers on their way to Christmas parties. If one were to judge from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, one might think that no one was left at home to give anyone welcome . . . but that's not the case, is it? Every home is expecting company and . . . [*He laughs.*] Scrooge is amazed.
- 3 [*Scrooge and Present zip past again. The lights fade up around them. We are in the Nephew's home, in the living room. Present and Scrooge stand watching the Nephew: Fred and his wife, fixing the fire.*]
- 4 **Scrooge.** What is this place? We've moved from the mines!
- 5 **Present.** You do not recognize them?
- 6 **Scrooge.** It is my nephew! . . . and the one he married . . .
- 7 [*Marley waves his hand and there is a lightning flash. He disappears.*]
- 8 **Fred.** It strikes me as sooooo funny, to think of what he said . . . that Christmas was a humbug, as I live! He believed it!
- 9 **Wife.** More shame for him, Fred!
- 10 **Fred.** Well, he's a comical old fellow, that's the truth.
- 11 **Wife.** I have no patience with him.
- 12 **Fred.** Oh, I have! I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always . . .
- 13 **Scrooge.** It's me they talk of, isn't it, Spirit?
- 14 **Fred.** Here, wife, consider this. Uncle Scrooge takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence?
- 15 **Wife.** Oh . . . you're sweet to say what I think you're about to say, too, Fred . . .
- 16 **Fred.** What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner by it, I can tell you that!
- 17 **Wife.** Oooooooo, Fred! Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner . . . ask my sisters, or your bachelor friend, Topper . . . ask any of them. They'll tell you what old Scrooge, your uncle, missed: a dandy meal!
- 18 **Fred.** Well, that's something of a relief, wife. Glad to hear it! [*He hugs his wife. They laugh. They kiss.*] The truth is, he misses much yet. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. Nay, he is my only uncle and I feel for the old

- POV: Marley
- “Every home is expecting company” - except Scrooge's home
- Nephew Fred is talking about what happened earlier when Scrooge said he didn't want to come to dinner
- Nephew's wife doesn't like Scrooge
- Fred can't be mad at him - he pities him
- Fred sees his mother in Scrooge and that's why he loves him so
- They are a happy couple
- Scrooge is missing out

Pg 261 SCENE 4: FRED's House

- Fred raises a toast to Scrooge
- The others do it as well
- Scrooge wants to be heard and seen by Fred and his wife
- Time is growing short - he is aging

STOP: 24:42

miser . . . but, I tell you, wife: I see my dear and perfect mother's face on his own wizened cheeks and brow: brother and sister they were, and I cannot erase that from each view of him I take . . .

19 **Wife.** I understand what you say, Fred, and I am with you in your yearly asking. But he never will accept, you know. He never will.

20 **Fred.** Well, true, wife. Uncle may rail at Christmas till he dies. I think I shook him some with my visit yesterday . . . *[Laughing]* I refused to grow angry . . . no matter how nasty he became . . . *[Whoops]* It was HE who grew angry, wife! *[They both laugh now.]*

21 **Scrooge.** What he says is true, Spirit . . .

22 **Fred and Wife.** Bah, humbug!

23 **Fred.** *[Embracing his wife]* There is much laughter in our marriage, wife. It pleases me. You please me . . .

24 **Wife.** And you please me, Fred. You are a good man . . . *[They embrace.]* Come now. We must have a look at the meal . . . our guests will soon arrive . . . my sisters, Topper . . .

25 **Fred.** A toast first . . . *[He hands her a glass]* A toast to Uncle Scrooge . . . *[Fills their glasses]*

26 **Wife.** A toast to him?

27 **Fred.** Uncle Scrooge has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink to his health. And I say . . . *Uncle Scrooge!*

28 **Wife.** *[Laughing]* You're a proper loon,⁵ Fred . . . and I'm a proper wife to you . . . *[She raises her glass.]* Uncle Scrooge! *[They drink. They embrace. They kiss.]*

29 **Scrooge.** Spirit, please, make me visible! Make me audible! I want to talk with my nephew and my niece!

30 *[Calls out to them. The lights that light the room and Fred and wife fade out. Scrooge and Present are alone, spotlight.]*

31 **Present.** These shadows are gone to you now, Mr. Scrooge. You may return to them later tonight in your dreams. *[Pauses]* My time grows short, Ebenezer Scrooge. Look you on me! Do you see how I've aged?

32 **Scrooge.** Your hair has gone gray! Your skin, wrinkled! Are spirits' lives so short?

33 **Present.** My stay upon this globe is very brief. It ends tonight.

34 **Scrooge.** Tonight?

Pg 262 SCENE 4: FRED's House



- 2 SYMBOLS of Poverty - “IGNORANCE and WANT”
- Beware of them - they are reminders of what rich ppl do not want to recognize
- CP reminds him of his own words: Are there no prisons, no workhouses?”
- The mood and tone of the scene turns DARK

ANNOTATE

What is the Ghost of Christmas Present's main message to Scrooge in paragraph 40? Mark key words in the paragraph and then jot the message in the margin.

- 35 **Present.** At midnight. The time is drawing near!
- 36 [*Clock strikes 11:45.*]
- 37 Hear those chimes? In a quarter hour, my life will have been spent! Look, Scrooge, man. Look you here.
- 38 [*Two gnarled baby dolls are taken from Present's skirts.*]
- 39 **Scrooge.** Who are they?
- 40 **Present.** They are Man's children, and they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. The boy is Ignorance; the 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.
- 41 [*He stretches out his arm. His voice is now amplified: loudly and oddly.*]
- 42 **Scrooge.** Have they no refuge or resource?
- 43 **Present.** Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses? [*Twelve chimes*] Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?
- 44 [*A Phantom, hooded, appears in dim light, D., opposite.*]



Pg 263 SCENE

- This is meant to be a dark scene - creepy
- The story takes a DARK turn

STOP:

REFER TO VIDEO: 1:06:25

CHRISTMAS FUTURE ENTERS

- CF looks like the Grim Reaper - he doesn't speak
- He says Time is precious NOW
- Conversation between business men - talking about a man who has died.
- This man had lots of money

45 Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

46 [*Present begins to deliquesce. Scrooge calls after him.*]

47 **Scrooge.** Spirit, I'm frightened! Don't leave me! Spirit!

48 **Present.** Prisons? Workhouses? Prisons? Workhouses . . .

49 [*He is gone. Scrooge is alone now with the Phantom, who is, of course, the Ghost of Christmas Future. The Phantom is shrouded in black. Only its outstretched hand is visible from under his ghostly garment.*]

50 **Scrooge.** Who are you, Phantom? Oh, yes. I think I know you! You are, are you not, the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come? [*No reply*] And you are about to show me the shadows of the things that have not yet happened, but will happen in time before us. Is that not so, Spirit? [*The Phantom allows Scrooge a look at his face. No other reply wanted here. A nervous giggle here.*] Oh, Ghost of the Future, I fear you more than any Specter I have seen! But, as I know that your purpose is to do me good and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company. [*Future does not reply, but for a stiff arm, hand and finger set, pointing forward.*] Lead on, then, lead on. The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me. Lead on, Spirit!

51 [*Future moves away from Scrooge in the same rhythm and motion employed at its arrival. Scrooge falls into the same pattern, a considerable space apart from the Spirit. In the space between them, Marley appears. He looks to Future and then to Scrooge. He claps his hands. Thunder and lightning. Three Businessmen appear, spotlighted singularly: One is D.L.; one is D.R.; one is U.C. Thus, six points of the stage should now be spotted in light. Marley will watch this scene from his position. C. Scrooge and Future are R. and L. of C.*]

52 **First Businessman.** Oh, no, I don't know much about it either way, I only know he's dead.

53 **Second Businessman.** When did he die?

54 **First Businessman.** Last night, I believe.

55 **Second Businessman.** Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die, really . . .

56 **First Businessman.** [*Yawning*] Goodness knows, goodness knows . . .

57 **Third Businessman.** What has he done with his money?

58 **Second Businessman.** I haven't heard. Have you?

59 **First Businessman.** Left it to his Company, perhaps. Money to money; you know the expression . . .

Pg 264 SCENE with 2 businessmen

- They MOCK the dead man
- This man had no friends or family
- Scrooge THINKS they're talking about Marley

STOP:

- NEXT: A different conversation between 2 maids, old man/salesman

60 **Third Businessman.** He hasn't left it to *me*. That's all I know . . .

61 **First Businessman.** [*Laughing*] Nor to *me* . . . [*Looks at Second Businessman*] You, then? You got his money???

62 **Second Businessman.** [*Laughing*] Me, me, his money? Nooooo!

63 [*They all laugh.*]

64 **Third Businessman.** It's likely to be a cheap funeral, for upon my life, I don't know of a living soul who'd care to venture to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?

65 **Second Businessman.** I don't mind going if a lunch is provided, but I must be fed, if I make one.

66 **First Businessman.** Well, I am the most disinterested among you, for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend: for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Well, then . . . bye, bye!

67 **Second Businessman.** Bye, bye . . .

68 **Third Businessman.** Bye, bye . . .

69 [*They glide offstage in three separate directions. Their lights follow them.*]

70 **Scrooge.** Spirit, why did you show me this? Why do you show me businessmen from my streets as they take the death of Jacob Marley? That is a thing past. You are future!

71 [*Jacob Marley laughs a long, deep laugh. There is a thunder clap and lightning flash, and he is gone. Scrooge faces Future, alone on stage now. Future wordlessly stretches out his arm-hand-and-finger-set, pointing into the distance, U. There, above them, scoundrels "fly" by, half-dressed and slovenly. When this scene has passed, a woman enters the playing area. She is almost at once followed by a second woman; and then a man in faded black; and then, suddenly, an old man, who smokes a pipe. The old man scares the other three. They laugh, anxious.*]

72 **First Woman.** Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!

73 **Old Joe.** You couldn't have met in a better place. Come into the parlor. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two ain't strangers [*He stands; shuts a door. Shrieking*] We're all suitable to our calling. We're well matched. Come into the parlor. Come into the parlor . . . [*They follow him D. Scrooge and Future are now in their midst, watching; silent. A truck comes in on which is set a small wall with fireplace and a screen of rags, etc. All props for the scene.*] Let me just rake this fire over a bit . . .

74 *[He does. He trims his lamp with the stem of his pipe. The First Woman throws a large bundle on to the floor. She sits beside it, crosslegged, defiantly.]*

75 **First Woman.** What odds then? What odds, Mrs. Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. HE always did!

76 **Mrs. Dilber.** That's true indeed! No man more so!

77 **First Woman.** Why, then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman! Who's the wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?

78 **Mrs. Dilber.** No, indeed! We should hope not!

79 **First Woman.** Very well, then! That's enough. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?

80 **Mrs. Dilber.** *[Laughing]* No, indeed!

81 **First Woman.** If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, the wicked old screw, why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself.

82 **Mrs. Dilber.** It's the truest word that was ever spoke. It's a judgment on him.

83 **First Woman.** I wish it were a heavier one, and it should have been, you may depend on it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We knew pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe.

84 **First Man.** No, no, my dear! I won't think of letting you being the first to show what you've . . . earned . . . earned from this. I throw in mine.

85 *[He takes a bundle from his shoulder, turns it upside down, and empties its contents out on to the floor.]*

86 It's not very extensive, see . . . seals . . . a pencil case . . . sleeve buttons . . .

87 **First Woman.** Nice sleeve buttons, though . . .

88 **First Man.** Not bad, not bad . . . a brooch there . . .

89 **Old Joe.** Not really valuable, I'm afraid . . .

90 **First Man.** How much, old Joe?

91 **Old Joe.** *[Writing on the wall with chalk]* A pitiful lot, really. Ten and six and not a sixpence more!

Pg 265 SCENE Convo between maids, man and old Joe/Salesman/Hocker

- The maids offer goods that they stole
- They are talking about a dead man again
- The dead man they're referring to was: a rude miser with no family
- The man died alone
- These ppl have negative feelings towards this man

Pg 266 SCENE: Transaction with the hocker/seller

- They are trying to selling things that belonged to others
- The maid took the bed curtains and blankets from the dead man's bed/body
- They all comment on how they think she was “desperate” to take this from the dead man

92 **First Man.** You're not serious!

93 **Old Joe.** That's your account and I wouldn't give another sixpence if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?

94 **Mrs. Dilber.** Me! [*Dumps out contents of her bundle*] Sheets, towels, silver spoons, silver sugar-tongs . . . some boots . . .

95 **Old Joe.** [*Writing on wall*] I always give too much to the ladies. It's a weakness of mine and that's the way I ruin myself. Here's your total comin' up . . . two pounds-ten . . . if you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown.

96 **First Woman.** And now do MY bundle, Joe.

97 **Old Joe.** [*Kneeling to open knots on her bundle*] So many knots, madam . . . [*He drags out large curtains; dark*] What do you call this? Bed curtains!

98 **First Woman.** [*Laughing*] Ah, yes, bed curtains!

99 **Old Joe.** You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?

100 **First Woman.** Yes, I did, why not?

101 **Old Joe.** You were born to make your fortune and you'll certainly do it.

102 **First Woman.** I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as he was. I promise you, Joe. Don't drop that lamp oil on those blankets, now!

103 **Old Joe.** His blankets?

104 **First Woman.** Whose else's do you think? He isn't likely to catch cold without 'em, I daresay.

105 **Old Joe.** I hope that he didn't die of anything catching? Eh?

106 **First Woman.** Don't you be afraid of that. I ain't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things if he did. Ah! You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache, but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one, too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

107 **Old Joe.** What do you mean "They'd have wasted it"?

108 **First Woman.** Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure. Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again . . .

109 [*She laughs, as do they all, nervously.*]

110 If calico⁶ ain't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough then for anything. It's quite as becoming to the body. He can't look uglier than he did in that one!

111 **Scrooge.** *[A low-pitched moan emits from his mouth; from the bones.]*
OOOOOOOOooooOOOOOOooooOOOOOOOO
ooooOOOOOOooooOO!

112 **Old Joe.** One pound six for the lot. *[He produces a small flannel bag filled with money. He divvies it out. He continues to pass around the money as he speaks. All are laughing.]* That's the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Hah ha ha!

113 **All.** HAHAHAAhahahahahah!

114 **Scrooge.** OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! *[He screams at them.]* Obscene demons! Why not market the corpse itself, as sell its trimming??? *[Suddenly]* Oh, Spirit, I see it, I see it! This unhappy man—this stripped-bare corpse . . . could very well be my own. My life holds **parallel**! My life ends that way now!

115 *[Scrooge backs into something in the dark behind his spotlight. Scrooge looks at Future, who points to the corpse. Scrooge pulls back the blanket. The corpse is, of course, Scrooge, who screams. He falls aside the bed; weeping.]*

116 Spirit, this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!

117 *[Future points to the corpse.]*

118 Spirit, let me see some tenderness connected with a death, or that dark chamber, which we just left now, Spirit, will be forever present to me.

119 *[Future spreads his robes again. Thunder and lightning. Lights up, U., in the Cratchit home setting. Mrs. Cratchit and her daughters, sewing]*

120 **Tiny Tim's Voice.** *[Off]* And He took a child and set him in the midst of them.

121 **Scrooge.** *[Looking about the room; to Future]* Huh? Who spoke? Who said that?

122 **Mrs. Cratchit.** *[Puts down her sewing]* The color hurts my eyes. *[Rubs her eyes]* That's better. My eyes grow weak sewing by candlelight. I shouldn't want to show your father weak eyes when he comes home . . . not for the world! It must be near his time . . .

Pg 267 SCENE convo with the salesman

- Scrooge is bothered by this scene bc the ppl are so crass in how they are mocking and making fun of a dead man and his belongings
- He thinks they are wicked ppl for talking like this.
- He thinks it MIGHT be HIM.
- He looks upon the corpse: IT IS SCROOGE

STOP

NEXT SCENE: CRATCHIT HOME

- Mrs Cratchit and the children are sad

123 **Peter.** *[In corner, reading. Looks up from book]* Past it, rather. But I think he's been walking a bit slower than usual these last few evenings, Mother.

124 **Mrs. Cratchit.** I have known him walk with . . . *[Pauses]* I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder and very fast indeed.

125 **Peter.** So have I, Mother! Often!

126 **Daughter.** So have I.

127 **Mrs. Cratchit.** But he was very light to carry and his father loved him so, that it was not trouble—no trouble. *[Bob, at door]*

128 And there is your father at the door.

129 *[Bob Cratchit enters. He wears a comforter. He is cold, forlorn.]*

130 **Peter.** Father!

131 **Bob.** Hello, wife, children . . .

132 *[The daughter weeps; turns away from Cratchit.]*

133 Children! How good to see you all! And you, wife. And look at this sewing! I've no doubt, with all your industry, we'll have a quilt to set down upon our knees in church on Sunday!

134 **Mrs. Cratchit.** You made the arrangements today, then, Robert, for the . . . service . . . to be on Sunday.

135 **Bob.** The funeral. Oh, well, yes, yes, I did. I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on Sunday, after the service. *[Suddenly]* My little, little child! My little child!

136 **All Children.** *[Hugging him]* Oh, Father . . .

137 **Bob.** *[He stands]* Forgive me. I saw Mr. Scrooge's nephew, who you know I'd just met once before, and he was so wonderful to me, wife . . . he is the most pleasant-spoken gentleman I've ever met . . . he said "I am heartily sorry for it and heartily sorry for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way, here's where I live." And he gave me this card.

138 **Peter.** Let me see it!

139 **Bob.** And he looked me straight in the eye, wife, and said, meaningfully, "I pray you'll come to me, Mr. Cratchit, if you need some help. I pray you do." Now it wasn't for the sake of anything that he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way. It seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim and felt with us.

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SCENE: CRATCHIT HOME

- Tiny Tim has passed away
- The family is preparing for for the funeral of Tiny Tim
- Nephew Fred offers his condolences
- Fred wants to employ a son of Cratchit (Peter)

STOP: 1

Pg 269 SCENE

- They all want to remember Tiny Tim with good memories
- They encourage each other

NEXT SCENE: Graveyard

- CP points to the tombstone
- It is the gravestone of Ebenezer Scrooge
- Scrooge is in despair over his own death

STOP: 1

140 **Mrs. Cratchit.** I'm sure that he's a good soul.

141 **Bob.** You would be surer of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised, if he got Peter a situation.

142 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Only hear that, Peter!

143 **Martha.** And then, Peter will be keeping company with someone and setting up for himself!

144 **Peter.** Get along with you!

145 **Bob.** It's just as likely as not, one of these days, though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we?—or this first parting that was among us?

146 **All Children.** Never, Father, never!

147 **Bob.** And when we recollect how patient and mild he was, we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

148 **All Children.** No, Father, never!

149 **Little Bob.** I am very happy, I am. I am. I am very happy.

150 *[Bob kisses his little son, as does Mrs. Cratchit, as do the other children. The family is set now in one sculptural embrace. The lighting fades to a gentle pool of light, tight on them.]*

151 **Scrooge.** Specter, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how I know it.

152 *[Future points to the other side of the stage. Lights out on Cratchits. Future moves slowing, gliding. Scrooge follows. Future points opposite. Future leads Scrooge to a wall and a tombstone. He points to the stone.]*

153 Am I that man those ghoulish parasites? so gloated over? *[Pauses]* Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of things that will be, or the shadows of things that MAY be, only?

154 *[Future points to the gravestone. Marley appears in light well U. He points to grave as well. Gravestone turns front and grows to ten feet high. Words upon it: Ebenezer Scrooge: Much smoke billows now from the grave. Choral music here. Scrooge stands looking up at gravestone. Future does not at all reply in mortals' words, but points once more to the gravestone. The stone undulates and glows. Music plays, beckoning Scrooge. Scrooge reeling in terror]*

155 Oh, no. Spirit! Oh, no, no!

156 *[Future's finger still pointing]*