

J o h n W o o ' s
A C H R I S T M A S C A R O L

written by
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(pseudonym)

based on the novel "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens

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JOHN WOO' S A CHRISTMAS CAROL

((Note: This story takes place in an alternate universe. The look of the film is dark, gothic London: the entire setting is not to outdate 1840. However, all of the modern technologies of today are present.))

FADE IN:

1 EXT. LONDON STREET - SNOWY OVERCAST AFTERNOON 1

The snow falls white. Bells ring in the distance. The street is populated with old gothic buildings, smoke pouring out of their chimneys. People walk the streets, cautiously.

We look closer at the people... they are weary, jumpy, miserable, wretched creatures. Each and every single one of them carries a firearm. We see children playing the street... and they too, are armed with modern weapons.

A tank rolls across the street, and British military officers stand guard across the way. It is a state of martial law.

A ragged man walks alone on the street. He is dressed poorly, and walks with a limp. He carries a bell, and a Bible.

RAGGED MAN

(talking to no one in particular)

Where has all the joy gone? Look at yourselves, benumbed fools!

As he speaks, he gets dirty and pitiful looks from the people... they shake their heads, or pay him no heed at all.

RAGGED MAN (cont' d)

Why must I beg? How blind can you be to not bear witness to the insanity before you? Are we so ignorant as to be such of ourselves? It's Christmas Eve, and yet, the sun does not shine! Not on us!

A surly-looking man appears out of nowhere and grabs the ragged man by the coat. He fires a bullet into his heart.

The snow falls white... and red. Bells ring in the distance. The ragged man falls, and the surly man leaves.

(CONTINUED)

The ragged man's eyes stare at the sky, and his blood pools upon the snowy ground. The people around simply walk by, and pay him no heed.

A group of men, five or so, dressed from head to toe in grey winter coats, come into frame. They walk with attitude. They are armed to the teeth.

Another group of men, also very well dressed, enters from the opposite direction. The man leading the group carries a black suitcase. His .45 swings from his hip as he walks.

The two groups meet on common ground. The air is tense, and the fog is low. The lead man, MARLEY, is a distinguished businessman in his late 40's. His eyebrows frost with snow, his hair flecks grey, and his eyes reflect danger. He speaks with a calculated British accent.

MARLEY

Good morrow, gentlemen.

One of the men from the other group steps forward,
NORTON.

NORTON

Mister Marley. I trust that you have the... present.

MARLEY

Of course, Mister Norton. After all, it's Christmas Eve. 'Tis the season to be giving.

NORTON

You're giving because you owe. We don't like debts, Mister Marley.

MARLEY

No, I guess you don't. Shall we?

Marley opens the suitcase...

...it's filled with enough money to buy a small country.

Marley shuts the suitcase, quickly.

NORTON

I want to count it.

MARLEY

Don't you trust me?

(CONTINUED)

NORTON
(sarcastic)
As much as I trust God.

MARLEY
Then be content with that.

NORTON
(choosing his words)
No, I'm not fucking content. I'll be content when that suitcase is out of your thievin' hands, and in mine, and after I count it, to make sure your thievin' hands didn't 'accidentally' keep some of our money. Then I'd like to shoot you three times in the face just for improvement.
(beat)
Now, do you really want me to be content?

Marley laughs, and dangerously so. All of the men draw their hands closer to their guns.

MARLEY
Who the fuck do you think you are? He who disrespects shall receive no respect. I shoot people whom I don't respect, Mister Norton.

NORTON
(sadistically)
Sir, I plead of you, don't fuck with me. I am so far above you on any measurable scale that your very existence insults me. And if you don't mind, sir, I wouldn't mind pulling out my firearm, and backing up my shit.

The two groups of men step back from each other. Everyone has slowly drawn their guns. A flood of laser pointers fills the area, a stark red contrast against the white snow.

MARLEY
I see your weapons are up-to-date.

NORTON
As are yours. Personally, I think it's pointless when everyone has them.

(CONTINUED)

MARLEY

Are you sure you want to do business
this way, Mister Norton?

NORTON

Is there another way, nowadays?

Tense beat. A true standoff.

Norton fires the first shot, tagging someone in the head.

What follows is a flurry of chaos:

Men dodge bullets.

Bullets dodge men.

Brains are ejaculated.

Bodies falling, snow falling, blood falling.

One by one each the men falls... the entire rain and hail
of bullets shakes the very foundations of the city.

After all is said and done, no one is left standing, and
only two men are left alive: Norton and Marley. They
both are hit, and crawl towards the black briefcase,
riddled with bullets.

Norton gets there first, and aims his laser-sighted
pistol directly between Marley's eyes. He gets up
slowly, as Marley groans in pain.

Norton stands above Marley, keeping steady aim. Marley
looks up, pathetically.

NORTON

Merry Christmas, Marley.

He fires a shot, sending Marley's brains slushing into
the snow. Norton limps off, and we pull up, as the snow
is stained red... as Christmas will never be the same.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK: "SEVEN YEARS LATER"

FADE IN:

2 EXT. COUNTING HOUSE - BLEAK AFTERNOON

2

We see a sign: "Scrooge and Marley". The snowflakes pile
atop it's frame.

(CONTINUED)

As we pull back, we see that the sign is attached to a huge building... enormous in its very nature for the time period. Very corporate, and very gothic.

We go inside...

3 INT. COUNTING HOUSE - BLEAK AFTERNOON

3

A greenish hue glowers over the place. An overhead lamp swings softly, steam arising: it's damn cold in here. The walls are bare, and there's not a single decoration in sight.

Inside, there are rows of desks, and at least a dozen secretaries, all of them overworked and underpaid. Accounting and filing papers make stacks high into the air. Every single person in this office is very busy.

BOB CRATCHIT, late 30's, meek and weary, works at a small desk at the very back of the room. He has an old monochrome computer that he works on. Next to him is a beat-up drafting table.

Cratchit shivers, his breath visible. He looks up, and around, rubbing his hands together for warmth. He looks over to the other side of the room..

Three goons are sitting around a table, playing poker. Henchmen, as they are, whom are there for insurance only.

Cratchit looks behind him: an office, a door ajar. The office Cratchit now stares at is immaculate. There are bills, enormous stacks of money, in this office.

Cratchit continues to stare... he's not looking at the bills... but the thermostat above the desk. His eyes hunger for it.

...but he quickly turns his head away, because in the frame of the door enters EBENEZER SCROOGE. He is a man in his early 60's, filled with contempt and hatred for the world. He is dressed like in thousand-dollar slacks, with a sharp black undershirt and tie, and a slick grey vest. Completely underdressed for the temperature, the cold doesn't touch him. He also dons dual silver handguns, from a shoulder strap.

RATLIFF, a ne'er-do-well gambler, enters through the main door. He takes one look at Scrooge and walks through the counting house and into Scrooge's office. Scrooge patiently shuts the door behind him.

4 INT. SCROOGE'S OFFICE - BLEAK AFTERNOON

4

Ratliff takes a seat, and fidgets nervously. Scrooge paces over him.

SCROOGE
You're late, Ratliff.

RATLIFF
(stammering)
Yes sir, and I'm sorry about that, sir, I know how difficult it is to see you... I... I... thank you, Mister, uh.. Marley.

SCROOGE
(smiling coyly)
Scrooge.

RATLIFF
Oh, oh.. oh, God, I apologize, Mister Scrooge...

SCROOGE
No need. I answer to both names.

RATLIFF
Well, I'm sure you know the reason that I'm here... and all...

SCROOGE
You need money. That's the only reason people see me.

RATLIFF
Yes, yes, of course.. well, seeing as how it was Christmas Eve, and I'm a bit in debt, and my family... well we need food... gotta pay rent.

Scrooge waits a beat, and looks him in the eye.

SCROOGE
Ratliff, don't immerse me in your bullshit. You're late, and now you're lying to me. Why are you lying to me, Ratliff?

RATLIFF
I'm not lying, Mister Scrooge, I seriously need this money...

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

Let me explain something. I'm a loan shark. Not a loan banker, or a loan nun, or a lone ranger, but a shark, Ratliff. I am in the business of making money. Not losing it at the track. Do you get me?

RATLIFF

C'mon, Mister Scrooge, it's Christmas Eve.

SCROOGE

(harsh)

Mister Ratliff, I only bet on sure things. You, sir, are about as volatile as things come.

Ratliff cowers.

SCROOGE (cont'd)

It makes my skin crawl that such vermin as yourself can make it into my offices and beg like mangy hounds. You even sunk so low as to bring your family into the equation, when the truth is, you'd probably sell them out in order to feel the thrill of the gamble just one more time.

RATLIFF

Please, Mister Scrooge...

(whispering)

...it's Christmas.

SCROOGE

(instantly)

Christmas! Christmas, indeed! How dare you. To add fatal insult to sustainable injury, you now hide behind the ignorant tradition of a pointless holiday? Get the fuck out of my sight... quickly, lest you are forcibly removed by the London coroner.

RATLIFF

Sir, I beg of you...

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

RATLIFF

Sir, please...

The door busts open behind Ratliff. Two of the henchman grab him and haul his ass out the door.

Cratchit appears momentarily afterwards, and knocks on the door.

SCROOGE

What do you want, Cratchit?

CRATCHIT

Sir, you have a visitor.

A boisterous young man in his late 20's, FRED, practically bounces into the room. He is dressed warmly, and holds a wreath in his hands. Cratchit goes back to his desk, but leaves the door open in order to watch.

FRED

Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE

(growling)
Bah! Humbug.

FRED

Humbug? Surely, you mean that not of Christmas?

SCROOGE

Yes, nephew, I mean that of Christmas. Merry Christmas... what on Earth do you have to be merry about? You're broke, nephew.

FRED

Come then, what on Earth do you have to be scornful about? You're rich, uncle.

SCROOGE

Scornful, nephew? Allow me to detail the situation of things in the world. The economy is in shambles, law is nonexistent, and on the 25th of every year, several billion idiots empty their pockets in order splendor themselves drunk with wine and delusion.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE (cont' d)

What is Christmas but a time to forget your shitty credit, your imminent foreclosure, your cheating whore of a wife, and the fact that you're a cog in the machine of life that will never amount to anything? Christmas, bah, it's an escape from the dangers of reality. If only I could have my way, every fucking soul whom uttered the words 'Merry Christmas' would fall the victim of a cold, steel bullet.

Fred is untouchable. He smiles. Nothing can ruin his mood.

FRED

Are you finished?

SCROOGE

No, I'm not! You keep Christmas in your way, and I'll keep it in mine.

FRED

You don't keep Christmas, Uncle.

SCROOGE

What, pray tell, has Christmas Day ever done for you?

FRED

Christmas is a time of pure joy, Uncle. It is a time, when regardless of race or creed, social status or wealth, that we can celebrate just to embrace warmth and happiness.

SCROOGE

Well then, nephew, tell me, are you happy? Have all your dreams not crumbled before your very eyes? Have all your ambitions not been stomped into the very ground by those with the power to do so? Have your worries not raped your blessings?

FRED

Does it matter? I'm alive, and I'm alive in spirit. Even if I had your sorrowful candor, I would then celebrate survival! Christmas is a time for forgiveness, and if nothing else, to remind us of just how special we all are...

(CONTINUED)

Cratchit applauds from the background. Scrooge's glare could set the warehouse on fire. Cratchit slowly stops, and looks down, regretful, and crawls back into a corner.

SCROOGE

(to Cratchit)

If I hear another sound from you, Cratchit, you'll celebrate Christmas in an unemployment office.

(to Fred)

You scare me, nephew. You actually believe the shit you're piling on me. You should work for the government.

FRED

Don't be angry, Uncle, please, I invite you to come and have dinner with us tomorrow evening.

Scrooge laughs, and it's a cold laugh. For the first time, Fred's smile falters.

SCROOGE

I'll see you, nephew. I'll see your corpse burn in the mortician's furnace first.

FRED

But why, Uncle?

SCROOGE

Why... did you marry that bitch of yours?

FRED

Because I fell in love!

SCROOGE

Because you fell in love?

(beat)

Preposterous.

FRED

Why do you treat me as such? What have I ever done to you? I ask nothing of you, I want nothing of you. Nothing except your friendship!

SCROOGE

(sneering)

Some people... look, I'll put this as cordially as I am able.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE (cont'd)
 I don't fucking like you, in fact, I
 can't stand the sight of you. I don't
 like you, or your family, in fact, I
 hope you all die. The knowledge that
 such impotent and naive folk have
 departed this world will surely
 brighten my darkest day.

FRED
 (with despair)
 But Uncle...

SCROOGE
 What part of that statement didn't you
 understand, nephew?

Fred gets the hint.

FRED
 (feigning a smile)
 There'll always be a place set for you
 at the table, Uncle. Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE
 Good afternoon.

FRED
 (trying)
 And a happy new year!

SCROOGE
 Good afternoon!

Fred leaves the wreath, and departs. The wreath sits on
 Scrooge's desk with a lonely air.

5 EXT. COUNTING HOUSE - BLEAK AFTERNOON

5

Cratchit looks up at Fred.

CRATCHIT
 A Merry Christmas, Fred.

FRED
 You too, Bob. Happy holidays.

Fred opens the door and leaves, and two men enter. They
 are solicitors, dressed well, books and lists in hand.

Scrooge enters and sees the two men standing in his
 entryway. He signals the henchman, who move to his side.

SCROOGE
 No solicitors.

(CONTINUED)

SOLICITOR #1

We're not solicitors, sir. I am addressing Mister Scrooge, or Mister Marley?

SCROOGE

Mister Marley is dead. Seven years this very night.

SOLICITOR #2

Well, no doubt his spirit lives on in you, sir.

SCROOGE

(sarcastically)

No doubt.

(beat)

I'm afraid you gentleman must part. We don't allow unwanted guests.

SOLICITOR #1

Pardon our intrusion, we are volunteers for the needy.

SCROOGE

(unbelieving)

Honestly, gentlemen, do these offices look, by their air alone, to be those of a man who would give to desperate gutter shit, pardon my eloquence.

SOLICITOR #2

Please sir, we are collecting for the homeless, and... they have no place to go, sir.

SCROOGE

Ah, the homeless. Tell me, are there still prisons?

SOLICITOR #2

Yes, sir, but...

SCROOGE

Are there still factories and sweatshops in abundance?

SOLICITOR #1

Why yes, but... it's Christmas, sir.

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

Then they can go there! And if that's not suitable for them, God forbid they get off the streets and get a job... and no longer add to the shame that this city bears upon its crest.

(beat)

As for Christmas, I personally think this whole Christmas thing has been blown way out of proportion. Gentlemen, I do not make myself merry at Christmas, and therefore I don't intend to fork over hard-earned funds to make poor people merry.

SOLICITOR #2

They're starving, Mister Scrooge...

SCROOGE

Let them starve.

SOLICITOR #2

Then they shall die, sir!

SCROOGE

Let them die! It shall decrease the surplus population!

SOLICITOR #1

(out of pure amazement)

How can you be so cold-hearted?

A spray of bullets hits the two solicitors. Cratchit ducks under his desk to avoid the fire. Scrooge stands and watches. When the hail stops, the solicitors fall in a heap.

SCROOGE

Because I can afford to be.

Scrooge looks at Cratchit, shaking in fear under his desk.

SCROOGE

Cratchit, let's not let in any more people, shall we?

CRATCHIT

(meekly)

Yes, Mister Scrooge.

Cratchit gathers himself together as best he can, and sits up at his desk.

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

I shall depart for the day. Have you wired the accounts through Zurich?

CRATCHIT

Yes, sir. I've spread the funds well. They're not traceable.

SCROOGE

Excellent.

Scrooge grabs his hat and coat off a rack, and puts them on. He looks at Cratchit... a pathetic shell of a man.

SCROOGE

I suppose you'll want tomorrow off.

CRATCHIT

If it's convenient, sir.

SCROOGE

It's not. Business stops for no one, especially not Christmas.

CRATCHIT

It's only one day, sir.

SCROOGE

A poor excuse. Nonetheless... be here all the earlier the morning after.

CRATCHIT

(smiling faintly)
Thank you, sir.

SCROOGE

Continue laundering the funds, Cratchit.

Scrooge steps over the bodies of the solicitors, and opens the door. Wind and snow batter him. He stops.

CRATCHIT

Merry Christmas, Mister Scrooge.

Scrooge doesn't even turn to look at him.

SCROOGE

Fuck Christmas.

Scrooge walks out.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. LONDON STREETS - BLEAK EVENING

6

Scrooge is out on the streets of old London... the afternoon has given way to evening. The mist and fog, mixed with the snow and the old gothic buildings, creates a very surreal look.

Scrooge takes time to observe the world around him. An old gothic building, crumbling under the snow. A meat-shop owner feeding a mangy hound. A flurry of gunshots ring out in the distance.

Across the street, a group of youths is torturing a man: he wears a Santa Claus costume, and is, for all intense purposes, Santa Claus himself. He has a noose around his neck and his feet on a chair. The youths mock and beat him. They kick the chair out from underneath him. Santa falls, his neck snaps, and he dangles in the London glow. The youths take off, running.

Scrooge walks on, numb to his environment, in any sense.

As Scrooge walks, several Asian men appear behind him.

They walk with flair, and are dressed head-to-toe in black. Underneath their garb they carry semi-automatic weapons.

Scrooge looks back and notices them. He pretends not to notice, but shudders nervously.

He's stopped by another group of Asian men who approach him from the front. Scrooge looks at the two of them. The men ready their weapons.

VOICE (O. S.)

Mister Scrooge, will you come with us,
please?

Scrooge nods reluctantly. He knows who they are.

They walk a bit, and sidetrack into an alleyway.

7 EXT. LONDON ALLEY - BLEAK EVENING

7

The alley is dark and dim. Alleycats scrounge through the trash. Shadows dart and dance.

One of the men approaches Scrooge. Tall, ruggedly handsome, and the charismatic leader of this mob, TAKEUCHI is both dangerous and charming at the same time.

(CONTINUED)

TAKEUCHI

Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Mister Takeuchi. What brings you to London?

TAKEUCHI

Ah, Scrooge, always the stout businessman. Relax... it's Christmas Eve.

SCROOGE

Yes it is.

TAKEUCHI

What brings me to London is you, Ebenezer Scrooge. You owe us money. Money in the millions.

(smiles)

Don't worry Scrooge. We know you're good for it, one way or the other.

SCROOGE

I have your money, gentlemen. It's squared away, invested and dispersed, per your request.

TAKEUCHI

That's wonderful, Mr. Scrooge! Absolutely wonderful. But I'd like to withdraw that cash. Today, in fact. I have some... shopping to do.

SCROOGE

It's not liquid. It'll take time to pull...

A gun is shoved under Scrooge's chin.

TAKEUCHI

My dear Scrooge, we both know that there's no way to liquidate that money before the new year. My job is simply to liquidate you.

SCROOGE

(realizing)

I've been set up!

(CONTINUED)

TAKEUCHI

Of course you have. We don't care about the money. It's more... personal than that.

SCROOGE

How have I wronged you, Mister Takeuchi? What deed have I done to deserve this?

TAKEUCHI

(smiles)

Pity, Scrooge, you're a modern businessman. I'm sure that your tidings call for a more... violent course of action from time to time. I'm sure you're just like me, a man who no longer remembers the faces of past associates whom have succumbed... to a less profitable fate. The difference between you and me, is that I have a mob behind me, whom are loyal, and you buy your loyalty with your henchmen. Do I really need a reason to kill you? Or an excuse to spill your blood on London soil? Or a justification? Better, still, I have a motivation.

The barrel of the gun is pressed tighter against Scrooge's face. He winces.

TAKEUCHI

Make your peace with God.

SCROOGE

I... I don't believe in God.

TAKEUCHI

You should. You're about to meet Him.

Takeuchi unhitches the safety.

Scrooge closes his eyes, and starts mumbling. He clenches his jaw, and even a tear rolls out...

TAKEUCHI

Such a heartwarming display... from a man without a heart.

(beat)

I'll tell you what, Scrooge, I'll make you a deal. It's Christmas Eve. I'll let you live.

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge opens his eyes, slowly...

TAKEUCHI (cont'd)

For a few hours. Take some time off,
enjoy the holidays. But on Christmas
day... surely as time, my gun will
fire, the shell will fall, and so will
you.

One of the men slams the butt of his gun into Scrooge's
stomach. Scrooge falls; the men walk off. Scrooge rolls
around in the snow, wincing in pain, struck and
humiliated.

Scrooge rolls on his back, and reaches into his pocket,
pulling out a sleek, and newly cracked, cellular phone.
He dials a number, and puts the phone to his ear. Tiny
snowflakes drift over him as he stares up at the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - BLEAK NIGHT

8

The snow falls upon the battered Scrooge. He waits
patiently outside of an old abandoned factory, beautiful
in scope, haunting in condition.

MAVERICK, a hip-cat American, walks into frame. He
shakes hands with Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Thanks for coming, Maverick.

MAVERICK

Got your page, Scrooge. What can I do
ya for?

SCROOGE

I need a favor. Something special.

MAVERICK

Special, meaning what?

SCROOGE

(beat; trembling)

I need... the most powerful thing you
have. I need a dose of your finest
substance, something that will assure
I leave in mind, before I leave in
body.

(CONTINUED)

MAVERICK

Bad day, huh? Don't worry, I have just the thing for bad days. I got your song and dance right here.

Maverick pulls out two small pills. He puts them in Scrooge's hand.

MAVERICK

You can pay me later. I know you're good for it. Besides, it's Christmas.

SCROOGE

(puzzled)
Thank you.

MAVERICK

Anytime.

Maverick starts to walk off.

SCROOGE

This shit any good?

MAVERICK

(grins)
Believe me, old friend, it will change your life.

Maverick leaves.

Scrooge looks at the pills in his hand, and without a second's hesitation, pops them in his mouth and downs them.

The world begins to spin out...

DISSOLVE TO:

9 EXT. LONDON STREETS - BLEAK NIGHT

9

Ebezener Scrooge stumbles across the streets of London. His distorted vision is now made worse by the drugs in his system: the old gothic buildings seem to leap out at him, the fog of Christmas seemingly surrounds him, and the light of the night seems to dance around his shadow.

A young boy is singing a Christmas carol in the distance. Scrooge haggardly approaches him, confusion and anger in his face. The boy ceases to sing upon seeing Scrooge.

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE
(disj ointedly)
Lad, no carol sung can stir this
heart.

Scrooge moves past him, and the boy just looks on
sadly...

CUT TO:

10 EXT. SCROOGE'S MANSION - BLEAK NIGHT

10

Scrooge stumbles to his home. It is a beautiful old
home, residing upon the streets of old London. A
sinister black gate guards the entrance. Vines tower
high above. The light hides away from the entire area.
Scrooge's mansion is reminiscent of a vampire's
cathedral.

Scrooge approaches the front door, and shakily pulls out
his keys. He looks at the knocker. It's a fairly large
knocker, very old, very traditional.

The knocker morphs... into Marley's face. Scrooge pulls
back in horror. Marley's face strobes with colors, then
to dark greyscale. It looks at Scrooge with a look of
pure horror.

Scrooge blinks, and looks again... it's just an ordinary
knocker. He reaches over and touches the knocker,
checking it for anything out of the ordinary.

He shakes his head, and opens the door.

11 INT. SCROOGE'S MANSION - BLEAK NIGHT

11

Scrooge lights a lantern in the pitch darkness. There is
almost no light in the mansion whatsoever. Scrooge takes
a quick double-take at the back of the knocker, but it's
unchanged.

Scrooge makes his way up the staircase. It's humongous
in scope and width, big enough to fit a large car onto.
As he walks, the lantern gives him a sultry glow. We can
even see minor details of the rest of the mansion: old
cathedral-style walls, beautiful but haunting wooden
decor, long arching windows... a place extravagant and
lush, but dimmed with grey due to age and lack of care.

Scrooge gets up the stairs, and pulls out his gun. He
swoons a bit, still quite fucked up. He puts down the
lantern, and grabs a Mag-Lite from a nearby shelf.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Armed with a Mag-Lite and a chromed gun, Scrooge proceeds to tear-ass around the upper floor of the old house. He runs from room to room, searching for any signs of intrusion.

After his paranoid rampage, he enters his own chambers.

12 INT. SCROOGE'S CHAMBERS

12

He walks inside, on the edge, and double-locks the door behind him. He then proceeds to arm a heavy-duty security system next to the door.

Scrooge shines the flashlight around his chambers: beautiful portraits hang on the walls. An old antique table is present, as are marble pillars, silk curtains, and lush decor from another time.

Scrooge checks under the bed, and satisfied with his search, turns the gas on in the fireplace. The fire flames instantly, creating a fiery hue for the room. The dutch tile wanes the reflection of the fires.

Scrooge takes off his coat and hat, and proceeds to slump down in an old chair. He looks at the weapon he holds in his hand: a beautiful silvery firearm. He caresses it, respects it, and sets it down on the table before him.

Scrooge tilts his head back, and tries to relax. He grins to himself, and sighs, under the effects of some wonderful drugs.

A bell on the other side of the room begins to swing. It does not ring, yet, but Scrooge does not see it. The bell, in all of it's aged and crafted power, rings.

Scrooge starts up, and looks at the bell. Soon many bells begin to ring, and the echoes chime through the old house, the acoustics frightening...

And then they cease. Scrooge can feel his own pulse increase. He pauses, grabs his gun, and wearily closes his eyes again.

We hear a thumping noise in the background. Chains rattling. Thump. Thump. Thump. Scrooge looks up, because he hears it, too. The noises get louder, almost as if an intruder were coming up the stairs.

The look on Scrooge's face is pure fear. He grabs his Mag-Lite and unhinges the safety on his gun, aiming at the door...

(CONTINUED)

...and through the white light of his Mag-Lite appears...
MARLEY'S GHOST.

Scrooge stares in horror. The Mag-Lite drops to the ground.

Marley is a beautiful, horrific creature. He is somewhat transparent, but not. The threads of his ghostly existence sway in nonexistent winds. His eyes glow, and his details and textures change with stunning resolution. A folded bandage adorns his head and chin, and chains, pale and rusty chains, dangle from his torso.

Scrooge has no words.

SCROOGE

Way, way too many drugs.

Marley approaches Scrooge, and looks at his gun. Scrooge is trembling badly.

MARLEY

You think that can hurt me, old friend?

SCROOGE

What are you?

MARLEY

You know who I was. Jacob Marley, your partner in this life.

SCROOGE

Marley's dead.

MARLEY

A useless observation, since I am a spirit which obviously is not alive.

SCROOGE

Can you sit down?

MARLEY

Yes.

SCROOGE

Then do it.

Marley walks over to the chair opposite the fireplace, and parks himself. Scrooge sits in the old chair opposite Marley, and keeps the gun trained on him.

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

What do you want with me, Marley?

MARLEY

Much, I'm afraid.

(beat)

You don't believe in me, do you? Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE

Oh, I don't know... some curdled milk, some feverish illness, a lot of fucking hallucinogenic drugs? Any of these things alone can affect the senses.

MARLEY

Believe what you will, then.

(beat)

I am doomed to wander the Earth, to bear witness to the misery which I have caused and cannot rectify anymore. I am beheld by what I cannot share, and what I should have shared in life.

SCROOGE

What say you, Marley, you describe to me visions of a personalized hell?

MARLEY

You've heard of Hell, Scrooge? Hell isn't a devil with a pitchfork; it's not bloody or gruesome or evil. It's lonely, it's hopeless, it's without escape, and it's eternal.

SCROOGE

May I ask what those chains are?

MARLEY

This, Scrooge, is the chain I forged in life. I made it of my own free will. Every misery, every sin, every wrongdoing... link, by link, by link. It will never leave me, and its burden and toll are heavy. Do you recognize it, Scrooge?

SCROOGE

(laughs nervously)

Nice try.

(CONTINUED)

MARLEY

Know this: the weight of this chain was yours, this eve, seven years ago. You have built upon its foundation since. Your chain, Scrooge, is much, much worse.

SCROOGE

That's nothing a little steroids and bodybuilding couldn't fix.

MARLEY

Ah, but this chain is not of the body.. it is of the mind, of the spirit, the soul, and the heart. It looks of steel, but upon closer inspection...

Marley picks up his chain, and shows it to Scrooge.

MARLEY (cont' d)

...it is filled with hate, anger, regret. The burdens of which will unravel one after almost no time at' all.

SCROOGE

I don't deserve this, Marley. I've always been a good businessman...

MARLEY

Business? Your business, my business, is the business of mankind! Benevolence, mercy, forbearance are the true business of human nature! And you, Scrooge, like myself, have disregarded such, and consummated material things.

Scrooge begins to sweat.

MARLEY (cont' d)

It is at this time of year, Ebenezer, that I suffer the most. Upon this night of good, no tortured soul is given any thought, nor any glimpse.

SCROOGE

Please, Jacob...

MARLEY

You have but one chance to escape my fate. One hope.

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

Anything...

MARLEY

You will be haunted by three spirits.

SCROOGE

More ghosts?

MARLEY

Yes.

SCROOGE

There has to be a less... supernatural way. This cannot be my last ray of hope.

MARLEY

Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls One. The second, on the next night at the same time. The third, on the next night after.

SCROOGE

Marley, I implore you!

MARLEY

Scrooge... don't fuck this up.

Marley vanishes.

Scrooge runs up to the window of his chambers, and opens them. A hail of snow rushes in, and Scrooge stares out the window...

...thousands of ghostly apparitions fly over the dark streets of London. They are beautiful, tortured, mournful beings. They too bear chains, like Marley's, but not as complex or long.

Scrooge stares in wonder and horror, the reflection of the entities shining in his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

13 INT. SCROOGE'S CHAMBERS

13

On the face of a clock... the hands move towards twelve, midnight. All is still dark. The window is still open.

The clock hits twelve. The chimes of midnight sing.

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge awakens, and sits up, startled. He looks around, puzzled.

SCROOGE

No...

He grabs the clock and looks at it.

SCROOGE (cont'd)

I can't have slept through an entire day...

The clock's hands speed ahead... to a quarter past... then to half past... then to three quarters past... (chimes echo).

The clock hits One. The chimes sing again. Scrooge lies in bed, awake. He hears a sound, and the wind wails...

...Scrooge reaches under his pillow, and pulls out a gun. He uncocks it, and points it...

...when he swings it around, as another gun swings into his face. A standoff. Scrooge looks at his assailant...

He is a boyish young man, with such weary eyes and stubble covering his boyish looks, that he could be an old man. His complexion is pale, deathly. He is the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.

SCROOGE

Let me guess... you're one of Marley's dead friends.

PAST

I am.

Past lowers his weapon, as does Scrooge.

SCROOGE

You scared me, you know.

PAST

I'm a ghost.

SCROOGE

Oh, yes, of course.

PAST

I am the ghost of Christmas past.

SCROOGE

Past... as in past Christmases?

(CONTINUED)

PAST

Past, as in your past.

SCROOGE

What business do you have here?

The ghost never smiles. His expression never changes. He's as cold as Scrooge might be.

PAST

Your welfare.

(beat)

Come with me.

SCROOGE

(getting up)

Where?

Past points towards the window, the curtains flapping in the breeze.

SCROOGE

I don't understand.

Past is silent. They walk towards the window, and gaze out at London. The night is silent, and the fog and bleakness is gone. It's a perfect, clear, silent night.

Past takes Scrooge's hand in his own, and begins to levitate. Scrooge begins to rise as well.

SCROOGE

Spirit, I am mortal, and liable to fall.

PAST

Believe me, I'd like to drop you. But I will not, and cannot. One touch from me shall uplift you...

(touches Scrooge's chest)

...more than this ever could.

Scrooge shows a hint of remorse, but shuts it back in.

DISSOLVE TO:

14 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CLEAR STARRY NIGHT

14

Within seconds, the city around them has vanished, and in its place, a beautiful snowy country road.

Scrooge gasps in awe, and kneels down to pick up some snow beneath him.

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

Good Heavens... this is where I grew up! Yes, yes!

PAST

You remember the way?

SCROOGE

I could walk it with a blindfold!

PAST

Then let us continue on.

Past and Scrooge walk along the old country road. They pass children playing, shops, markets, old memories... no one pays any attention to them.

SCROOGE

Can they not see us?

PAST

They are but shadows of things that have been. They do not exist. And they are not aware of our presence.

As merry folk pass by, and wish each other greetings, Scrooge smiles. He doesn't know why.

Past and Scrooge approach an old schoolhouse. They peer into the window of the schoolhouse.

Inside, a lone child is left. The child is filled with both wonder, and sadness.

PAST

Do you know who this child is?

SCROOGE

(hushed)

Yes. It's... me.

PAST

Let us continue.

Past and Scrooge continue a short ways until they reach a large mansion. The mansion itself consists of red brick, with many wears and cracks. The land around is overgrown with grass, the stables lonely and the chickens clucking.

CUT TO:

15 INT. BARREN ROOM

15

Past and Scrooge walk through a wall into a barren room, inside of the old red mansion. The room itself is as cold and dank as Scrooge's counting house. A few desks and dusty window panes are the only traces of style.

Young Scrooge, sitting by the fire, reads a book. He is filled with wonder, and sadness, still.

PAST

You remember this Christmas?

SCROOGE

Yes. I was reading, by that fire. I was lost in another world... a world of Ali Baba, yes, yes, Ali Baba, with the ax in his belt... and Valentine! And his brother Orson!

Scrooge is laughing and crying at the same time. A tear trickles down his cheek.

SCROOGE

I remember stories... of a parrot, yes, Robin Crusoe, poor boy... that beautiful parrot, with the green body and the yellow tail...

PAST

You had a vivid imagination.

SCROOGE

It was my... hatred for the world I was given. On the island, on faraway lands, I was...

Scrooge stops. And buries the past.

SCROOGE (cont'd)

Poor boy.

PAST

Pardon?

SCROOGE

I wish...
(drying his tears)
Nevermind. It's too late now.

PAST

What ails you, Scrooge?

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

There was a boy singing a Christmas carol last night. I would have liked to have given him something.

PAST

(nodding)

Let us see another Christmas.

The room itself morphs... the windows grow more cracked, the walls grow darker, and the room grows dustier, older. Young Scrooge advances in age by two or three years, and several inches in height.

The door to the room opens, and a young girl, FAN, runs into the room. She is adorable, and younger than Young Scrooge. She runs into his arms, and showers him with hugs and kisses.

FAN

Brother! Dear brother! I have come to bring you home! Home!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Home, little Fan?

FAN

Yes! Home! Father is so much kinder now, and our home is a Heaven! One night Father spoke to me gently, so gently even, that I was not afraid to ask him if you might come home! And he said yes... but first, we're going to be a family, we're going to be together at Christmas, and be merry, oh so merry, brother!

YOUNG SCROOGE

You're quite a woman, little Fan!

They run out of the room.. and the room morphs again.

16 INT. WHITE APARTMENT - DARK NIGHT

16

...into a white apartment. There is blood all over the walls. There is glass all over the floor, and most of the furniture is broken. The apartment is dimly lit in metallic white, and the night outside is pitch black.

VOICE (O. S.)

You're quite a woman, little Fan!

(CONTINUED)

Fan comes onscreen: she is a woman now, but her blonde hair has been torn and soaked in blood. She bleeds from her face something fierce. Her lips are cut up. But despite her pain, she is not afraid.

FAN
William, I want you to stop this.
It's Christmas. Please, get ahold of
yourself!

William walks onscreen. He's drunk, surly, and dirty. There's blood on his shirt and fists.

WILLIAM
Baby, baby, baby, I love you too much.
I love you in way you cannot possibly
imagine.

He strikes her, hard. She falls to the ground.

Back on Past, and Scrooge, who watches in sheer horror... as we see the reflection of events in his eyes...

...as the reflection shows Fan being raped. We can hear the terror and the screaming in the background, but the glimpses of images in Scrooge's eyes are truly fearful.

Back on William, who gets up, and zips his fly up. He pulls out a magnum.

Fan, her breasts exposed and her skirt torn, turns to look at him.

FAN
Fuck you, William!

WILLIAM
I just did.

William pulls the trigger and Fan's head is blown apart.

Scrooge turns away in shock... the tears flowing down his face.

PAST
She died a woman, a delicate creature,
but she had a large heart.

SCROOGE
God...

PAST
I believe she had children...

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

One child. My... nephew.

The room morphs yet again...

17 INT. FEZZIWIG'S WAREHOUSE - SNOWY NIGHT

17

...into a bright and merry party. Men and women sing, dance, and cheer. A band plays swing Dixie, accompanied by classical violins.

SCROOGE

Why... I was apprenticed here!

A man sits behind an extremely high desk. He is a gentleman in a Welsh wig, and a style of dress of an older era. He writes feverishly, and looks up.

SCROOGE

Old Fezziwig! Alive again! My God.
Bless his heart, he's alive again.

FEZZIWIG

Scrooge! Scrooge, my boy!

And entering through the crowd is YOUNG SCROOGE, now a strapping young man in his mid-twenties. Scrooge is robustly handsome, and well-dressed. Everyone carries firearms at this party, but they too, are not as modern. Another young man, DICK WILKINS, follows close behind.

SCROOGE

That's... that's me! And Dick Wilkins, my fellow apprentice, to be sure! Poor, poor Dick Wilkins...

YOUNG SCROOGE

Fezziwig! Excellent party!

FEZZIWIG

No more work tonight, boys! No more, Ebenezer! No more, Dick! It's time to celebrate! It's Christmas Eve!

WILKINS

Yes, sir!

FEZZIWIG

Let's have these shutters up, boys, before anyone can utter the words 'Jack Daniels'.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone laughs, even old Scrooge. Fezziwig jumps down from his desk with amazing agility, and runs into the crowd. Young Scrooge and Wilkins follow.

FEZZIWIG

Clear some room boys! We're gonna swing, sing and dance the night away!

Fezziwig grabs his wife, and they dance. Young Scrooge and Dick Wilkins each take the hand of a beautiful girl, and they too, have the time of their lives.

SCROOGE

That's... that's Belle.

As Young Scrooge and BELLE, a stunningly gorgeous young lady, are the perfect match for each other. They dance, and the smiles never leave their faces.

BELLE

You must be Ebenezer.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes! Are you a friend of Fezziwig's?

BELLE

Yes... he speaks the world of you.

YOUNG SCROOGE

And whom might you be, pretty lass?

BELLE

(giggling)
My name's Belle.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Belle... beautiful.

Belle blushes.

YOUNG SCROOGE (cont'd)

So what has that scoundrel Fezziwig told you about me?

BELLE

He says that you're a good study, a quick learner, a dedicated worker... and a vigorous dreamer. You'd think you were his own flesh and blood.

YOUNG SCROOGE

He said all that?

(CONTINUED)

BELLE

Yes. So, if it's true, what do you dream about?

YOUNG SCROOGE

(innocently)

What an odd question... uh, everything. I dream about life, I dream about the stars, I dream of something better.

BELLE

Something better?

YOUNG SCROOGE

(smiles)

Yeah. There's always something better.

BELLE

What, are you not satisfied with your situation? Are you unhappy?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Oh no, no... nothing so trivial. I just look at the world... and...

(he stops; smiles)

What do you dream about, Belle?

BELLE

(giggling)

You didn't finish your sentence, Ebenezer. You tell me, and I'll tell you.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I just wish things were better. I don't have another way of explaining it.

BELLE

Well...

(with sincerity and understanding)

I wish the world wasn't such a violent place. I wish I wasn't so scared. I wish I could have the chance to live, perchance to dream.

Young Scrooge is deeply moved.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Right now, I wish only to be with you.

(CONTINUED)

BELLE

What a sweet thing to say, Ebenezer.
Do you use that line on all the girls?

YOUNG SCROOGE

No... I talk about roses, gifts,
candies. But not for you... ..for
you, Belle, I'll talk of stars and
starlight.

BELLE

Ebenezer the dreamer...

She's in love. He's in love. They're in love.

On Fezziwig, who's dancing up a storm.

FEZZIWIG

There's still life in the old man,
yet!

BELLE

Isn't he a card?

YOUNG SCROOGE

He's something, all right.

On old Scrooge, who's face turns morbid...

SCROOGE

No...

At the entrance to Fezziwig's warehouse, a group of men burst through the door, holding old-style WWI machine guns. They wear garb resembling old Nazi uniforms.

The party comes to a dead silence. Even Fezziwig has a worried look on his face.

The men begin firing into the crowd. Many people are hit, racked with bullets as they fall lifelessly to the ground.

Young Scrooge draws his firearm, and pulls Belle to the ground to avoid fire.

Fezziwig crawls over to the desk, and pulls out a double-barrelled shotgun. He chooses his target carefully, and unloads a round into one of the gunmen. Quickly enough, he unloads a second round; a second gunman is hit. Fezziwig, having been spotted, is shot repeatedly by the remaining men.

(CONTINUED)

Both old and young Scrooge recoil in sheer horror... Fezziwig falls, and with him, dies any hope left in Scrooge.

Young Scrooge looks over to Dick Wilkins.

YOUNG SCROOGE
Stay down!

Young Scrooge stylishly draws out both of his guns. Leaping to his feet and diving forward, he fires both guns at the same time. He racks up a kill, and diverts the fire from the other gunmen. Young Scrooge dives behind Fezziwig's high desk, which is now being racked with bullets.

Very few people are left alive... but there's only two gunmen left as well.

Dick Wilkins draws his pistol and starts firing. Young Scrooge sees, and provides cover fire.

Wilkins shoots one of the gunmen... who spins around and shoots Wilkins.

YOUNG SCROOGE
Dick...!!!

Dick Wilkins and the gunman empty both their clips into each other, and they each fall.

Scrooge rolls out from the high desk, and is tagged in the left shoulder. He drops one of his guns, and with the other one, ends the final gunman's life with a bullet in the eye.

Old Scrooge, who has relived the entire event from an outsider's perspective, looks at the massacre... many people have died here tonight. The only ones left alive are Young Scrooge, and...

Belle, who's crawling around the floor. Young Scrooge sees her, and runs over to her.

YOUNG SCROOGE
Are you hit? Are you okay?

BELLE
Yeah... are you okay?

YOUNG SCROOGE
I'll be fine. Come on...

(CONTINUED)

They run out into the night.

On Old Scrooge, who is burdened by the sights...

SCROOGE

I have no words. Why did this happen?
We never knew who those men were.

PAST

Things happen for a reason. And as
disagreeable as it is, you lived.

SCROOGE

Poor Fezziwig, he never hurt a soul.
He brought nothing but joy into
people's lives. He didn't deserve
this fate. Fezziwig, a man of such
immense power, the power to alter
lives, and he spent gracious heaps of
money, his money, to make our
existences a little bit better. The
happiness he gave was as if it had
cost a fortune.

Scrooge stops, and trembles. He looks out at the bodies.

SCROOGE (cont'd)

How I wish I could say a few words to
my clerk, Cratchit... how I wish...

Scrooge looks at the ghost of Christmas Past, and the
room morphs away once more...

18 INT. COUNTING HOUSE - VERY DARK NIGHT

18

"Young" Scrooge, now a man of thirty-four, has lost the
spark of glee in his eyes. He looks almost as he does
now: cold and bitter. He has fewer wrinkles, more hair,
but the same hatred for being.

Young Scrooge sits in his Counting House, which is in an
arrangement unlike what we've seen before: this was many
years ago. Scrooge does not have an office, or a clerk,
instead, his desk now is Cratchit's desk in the future.

Bills atop of bills are piled on the desk. Scrooge is
writing serial numbers, laundering funds... and next to
him, sits Belle. Her expression is one of desperation.

BELLE

Ebenezer...

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG SCROOGE
(hatefully)
What?

BELLE
Please Ebenezer, hear my words now,
before you leave me for this... this
money.

YOUNG SCROOGE
What don't you understand, Belle?
There is nothing of greater misery
than being impoverished! There is
nothing more pure than the contention
of wealth! Money... condemns none.

BELLE
How ignorant you are! I have watched
you, watched you as your goals and
dreams fell victim one by one to the
master goal, your only passion left:
that of gain. It consumes you,
Ebenezer. What of gain in spirit, or
gain in knowledge?

YOUNG SCROOGE
I've grown wiser.

BELLE
Wiser, maybe, as all experience
provides knowledge. But morally,
ethically, Ebenezer, you've lost, not
gained.

YOUNG SCROOGE
Bah.

BELLE
You've changed. Maybe not in your
feelings towards me, but you've fallen
in love with something else as well.
You were another man when I fell in
love with you!

YOUNG SCROOGE
I was a boy.

BELLE
You were never a boy!

This stops Young Scrooge in his tracks. He looks up at
her.

(CONTINUED)

BELLE (cont' d)

You act is if our relationship is faltering because it was not profitable! I have been patient, I have waited, and I have tried! And I've made my decision. I'm going to release you.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Did I ever seek separation? Ever?

BELLE

Not in words.

YOUNG SCROOGE

You're leaving me?

BELLE

With a full heart, for the sake of the man I once loved. I pray that you may one day relearn the meaning of the word regret. I hope you will look back upon this moment, and painfully.. but you won't. You may, for a short while, but you would soon dismiss it as an unprofitable dream, and never look back.

(beat)

I hope you're content with the life you've chosen for yourself.

Belle walks out. Young Scrooge ponder a moment, and goes back to his work, barely missing a beat.

Old Scrooge turns to the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE

(whispering)

Please Spirit, I beg of you, show me no more. Why do you delight in my torture? Take me home, take me home.

CUT TO:

19 INT. SCROOGE'S CHAMBERS

19

Scrooge is suddenly back in his chambers, as if nothing had happened. He staggers, off-balance. He flops down on the bed, and passes out.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

20 INT. SCROOGE'S CHAMBERS

20

We can hear loud snoring in the B.G.

The clock chimes at One, alternating with the snoring.

Scrooge wakes up. He shakes his head, and sits up.

A strange and forboding light shines brightly from the middle of the chambers. Scrooge stares at it... it's in his room, but there's no explanation for it, or where it came from.

BOOMING VOICE (O. S.)

Enter!

Scrooge blinks, gets off the bed, and walks towards the light...

...when his room transforms suddenly. The room is now bright with light, albeit a gloomy light. Where bare walls once stood now stand mountains of food: Christmas food, nonetheless. The ceiling is covered with lush green vegetation.

Scrooge looks upwards, and his jaw drops...

...sitting there is HUGE woman, dressed in a toga, of sorts. She is a giant compared to Scrooge, and towers over him with her presence as well. She is the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

SCROOGE

Let me guess...

PRESENT

The ghost of Christmas present. I take it you have never before seen the likes of me.

SCROOGE

I... uh, no.

PRESENT

What a pity.

SCROOGE

Shall we get on with it?

PRESENT

Sure. Touch my robe.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

Scrooge does so, and holds on... because...

21 EXT. LONDON SKIES - CLEAR NIGHT

21

...the room and reality give way to the snowy, breezy night skies. Scrooge and the spirit soon are flying high, and Scrooge can't help but scream.

SCROOGE

Ahhhhh!

PRESENT

Relax, will'ya?

SCROOGE

This... this is glorious. Look, I can see bakers, grocers, diners, and shops! Even the food stands are visible from here!

PRESENT

Sometimes it helps to have an eagle's point of view. Anything askew to alter a static viewpoint.

SCROOGE

I had no idea...!

They swoop over the buildings of London, and soon fly down to a cozy but quaint dwelling in the suburbs of London.

22 INT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - CLEAR NIGHT

22

Scrooge and Present enter the house of the Cratchits. It is a meager dwelling. The walls are marred with cracks, chipping, and water stains. There is little to no furniture, and a tiny, rotting Christmas tree with few ornaments.

SCROOGE

Spirit, where are we?

PRESENT

This is the home of your clerk, Bob Cratchit.

MRS. CRATCHIT comes out of the kitchen. A homely woman, she wears a hand-me-down dress, decked with used ribbons and lace. Two of her children, a boy and a girl, around ten years of age, follow.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. CRATCHIT

Go get your brothers and sisters.

The girl runs off, and comes back with two smaller Cratchit children. They are filled with life, zest, and joy.

From the other room, Bob Cratchit comes out, carrying the youngest of his brethren, TINY TIM, upon his shoulders. Tiny Tim carries a steel crutch, and his leg is bundled in a cast.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh Bob, there never was such a turkey!

Bob Cratchit smiles, and looks at Tiny Tim.

CRATCHIT

Give me a kiss, son.

Tiny Tim throws his arms around his father, and gives him a small peck.

TINY TIM

What a Christmas, Father!

CRATCHIT

Indeed, Tim. Come on.

Cratchit lets Tiny Tim down. He giggles, and using his crutch, hobbles over to the table.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I haven't seen that spark in your eyes in so long, Robert. Maybe there still is magic in the world.

CRATCHIT

Oh, come now, it's Christmas! I have every right to have a spark.

(he holds her hands)

No matter what, we shall deal with it. And tonight, the world comes to a halt, just for us.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Bless your soul, Bob.

They walk into the kitchen, where the children are making a ruckus. Scrooge and the Spirit follow in the B.G.

23 INT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CLEAR NIGHT

23

MARTHA
(tugging at her mother)
Mommy, mommy, mommy...

MRS. CRATCHIT
One second, dear.

Mrs. Cratchit pulls Bob aside. Scrooge moves closer to listen.

MRS. CRATCHIT
(with a false smile)
How did little Tim behave?

CRATCHIT
(faltering)
As good as gold, and sometimes better. Sometimes, he gets so thoughtful, sitting by himself, and he thinks the strangest things you've ever heard! He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the Church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.

Cratchit's lip trembles.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Oh, Bob...

CRATCHIT
(faltering badly)
He's... he's so strong, so courageous.

MRS. CRATCHIT
We are blessed to have such a son.

CRATCHIT
(smiling)
Indeed, we are.

The Cratchits sit down.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Your father will say grace.

(CONTINUED)

CRATCHIT

(beat)

Oh Lord, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We say grace tonight for simplicity. We thank you, Lord, for this sumptuous feast. We thank you, for all the little things. And we thank you most, for those things that we behold most dear to us.

(he looks up at Tiny Tim)

Amen.

(beat)

Merry Christmas!

And the Cratchits delve into the food. And for them, a mighty feast it is: pudding and turkey, goose, and all. Many comments are made about the feast. Plates are left empty and stomachs are left filled.

Scrooge watches with a longing he's never felt before.

At last, Cratchit raises his glass.

CRATCHIT

I propose a toast... to Mister Scrooge, the founder of the feast!

The table grows silent. Scrooge looks disturbed.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Founder of the feast? Indeed, the founder of the feast. You should invite him here Robert, I would give him a piece of my mind to feast upon.

CRATCHIT

Dear, the children.. Christmas.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Only on Christmas would a good, decent man drink a toast to such an odious, pitiful creature. You know better than anyone just how cold that bastard is!

CRATCHIT

Dear... it's Christmas. Let it be.

MRS. CRATCHIT

(beat)

And so I will, but for your sake, not his.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

MRS. CRATCHIT (cont' d)
I hope he lives a long life, alone,
with his own special kind of merriness
and generosity.

She drinks. The children drink, solemnly. Tiny Tim drinks last of all, but reluctantly as well.

DISSOLVE TO:

24 INT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - CLEAR NIGHT

24

The family sits by the fireplace, playing games, and telling stories. The fire burns warm, and so does the emotion.

Scrooge, all the while, cannot but help stare at young Tiny Tim. Scrooge stares at his crippled leg, and the crutch.

SCROOGE
How did that happen?

PRESENT
Let me show you.

The room morphs...

25 INT. SCHOOLYARD - OVERCAST AFTERNOON

25

...into a schoolyard. A bell rings... and class is dismissed. Children run out into the yard to play, for it is recess. But... every single child is armed with a gun.

Tiny Tim exits the classroom. He is unarmed. Several bullies start to mess with him.

BULLY #1
Hey little Tim, where's your gun?

TINY TIM
Don't have one.

BULLY #2
You gotta have a gun, Tim. It's gonna be law pretty soon.

BULLY #1
What kind of pussy doesn't arm himself
in today's day and age?

(CONTINUED)

TINY TIM
I don't understand the need to.

BULLY #1
Without a gun, how are you going to defend yourself?

BULLY #2
Yeah, Tim, are you bulletproof or something?

TINY TIM
What do I need a gun for?

BULLY #1
How about to defend yourself?

TINY TIM
Never had a need to shoot someone in defense.

The Bully draws his pistol. The rest of the group backs off.

BULLY #1
What if someone did this to you? And tried to rob you?

TINY TIM
No one has, yet, put it down!

BULLY #2
Wake up, Tim. This is the real world. People shoot each other. You gotta be prepared. You gotta learn...

TINY TIM
Stop it!

BULLY #1
Make me!

The Bully fires a round into Tim's right leg, above the knee. Tim wails, and collapses to the ground. The Bully laughs, and runs away. Tim bleeds and cries on the ground.

Scrooge turns to the Spirit.

SCROOGE
(remorseful)
I've grown so used to the senselessness of it all.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE (cont' d)

This is passe to me. I grew up like this. I was shot several times as a small child, myself.

(beat)

Does Cratchit not have medical insurance?

PRESENT

Your business is not legal, and he cannot afford insurance on the salary you pay him.

SCROOGE

So the bullet remains in Tim's leg?

PRESENT

Yes. And the infection spreads every day.

The scene morphs again...

26 INT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - CLEAR NIGHT

26

...back to the Cratchit home, like nothing had happened. Tiny Tim, cast and all, is playing joyously with his father, and the rest of the family is happily lost in the moment.

SCROOGE

(dismayed)

Tell me, Spirit, what will happen to Tiny Tim?

PRESENT

I see a vacant seat, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved by his family. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will perish.

SCROOGE

Please, no... say his life will be spared!

PRESENT

He will die without medical treatment. Or in your words, 'Let them die! It shall decrease the surplus population!'

SCROOGE

(wailing)

You would use my own words against me?

(CONTINUED)

PRESENT

They are your words. You speak of hatred for the mass, yet you show warmth for the individual. What a curious creature you are.

(beat)

Look at them. They have nothing. And yet, they are so much wealthier than you could ever hope to be.

Scrooge is silent.

PRESENT (cont' d)

Who are you, with the power to change things, to decide who lives and who dies? It just may be, that in the sight of Heaven, that you are worthless and less fit than millions to live than this poor man's child.

SCROOGE

I... I have my share of problems, too, you know.

PRESENT

So I hear. But all things being unequal, they are nice problems to have.

SCROOGE

Am I already dead, Spirit? I may reconcile with the fabric of good, only to have the thread unravel before my eyes? Am I fucked?

PRESENT

Maybe. Or perhaps, the survival of your soul will prove to resolve the survival of yourself. Hope, the very thing you condemn, may just be your only redemption, Scrooge.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 EXT. LONDON STREETS - CLEAR NIGHT

27

The ghost and Scrooge walk the street of Christmas. They pass life itself:

A man keeping the street lights lit.

Several men crowded around a fire, trying to keep warm.

(CONTINUED)

A group of lonely carollers who sing a Christmas song.

SCROOGE

Spirit... this can't be.

PRESENT

What can't be?

SCROOGE

This view of life. Where I come from,
there is violence and death
everywhere. Guns sing the Christmas
carols.

PRESENT

As it is here too. The world is what
we make of it, Ebenezer Scrooge, and
although these people, good people,
live in fear of their lives... they
have put it aside for this night. And
if they die on Christmas Eve, even
Christmas Day, they will have passed
with glory in their hearts.

SCROOGE

But why... why must I change? There
are men out there whom commit far more
horrible deeds than I!

PRESENT

Are there? There are murderers
walking these streets. You are one
of them. But you don't just take
lives, you destroy them with your
words. You are a murderer of hopes
and dreams, of merriment and simple
pleasure. Each day you kill is as
terrible as each life you take.

SCROOGE

But.. look at this.

Life on these streets, for all of it's temporary hope, is
still miserable.

PRESENT

The world is not a friendly place,
anymore. But if Ebenezer Scrooge can
change... if you, of all people, can
change, then maybe the human race
still has a chance.

(CONTINUED)

We are witness as two robbers viciously gun down a very old woman. She's at least ninety, and yet, they empty their clips into her.

SCROOGE

I've never known another world.

PRESENT

You've grown numb to the nightmare.

The environment morphs...

28 INT. FRED'S HOME - CLEAR NIGHT

28

...as Scrooge and the ghost find themselves standing in midst of Scrooge's Nephew's house. It is not quite as downtrodden as Cratchit's home, and it has a very jolly feel to it all.

Sitting around the fire, on couches and chairs, are Fred, Scrooge's NIECE, and several plump SISTERS. They drink cocoa and talk of Christmas tales. There are as many as twenty people there, total.

Scrooge observes, silently...

SCROOGE

Nephew...

Fred laughs heartily. A tremendous belly laugh. His audience joins him.

FRED

Christmas a humbug, that's what he said to me.

(cracks up)

Not those exact words, mind you... his were much more... uhm...

(sarcastically)

...eloquent and colorful.

Everyone cracks up, save Scrooge and the Ghost.

NIECE

More shame for him, Fred! I'll bet he believed it, too.

FRED

Oh, I'm sure. He's a comedian, a comical old fellow. And be that the truth, I have nothing foul to say of him. His offenses carry his own punishments.

(CONTINUED)

NIECE
Sure they do. Your uncle Scrooge will
get what's coming to him.

FRED
(smiling)
Oh, hush. He's harmless.

NIECE
Well... he's rich. Or at least, so
you tell me, Fred.

FRED
So? His wealth is of no use to him!
He doesn't use it to make himself
comfortable, nor anyone else. And...
(chuckles)
...I doubt he's ever going to have the
satisfaction of thinking he's ever
going to benefit us with it.

NIECE
I have no patience for that man.

The rest of the women there agree. Fred shakes his head,
and smiles softly.

FRED
Well, I have. I feel sorry for the
man.

NIECE
You mean, pity?

FRED
No... well, yes...
(laughter)
I doubt I could be angry with him if I
tried! Who suffers by ill whims? He,
of course. Himself, always. He
convinces himself he doesn't like us,
hates us in fact, and won't come and
dine with us. What consequence does
he serve? He doesn't lose much of a
dinner.

NIECE
(playfully offended)
On the contrary, I think he loses an
excellent dinner.

The rest of the ladies agree.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

My dear, I did not mean it as such. While your cooking is excellent, I'm talking about pure resource. I'm sure Uncle could afford the best food from all around the world.

NIECE

I'm sure he could. But is there a nerve, a taste bud, in that man's mouth or body which could give him the enjoyment of it?

FRED

(laughs)

My point is this. By not spending time with us, his family, he loses not money or time, but merely some happy moments. How could a twinge of merriment do harm to a man? But I'm sure, after being alone for so long, that he must have more pleasant companions in his imagination.

(the room cracks up)

All things aside, I would really like for him to be here. I'll invite him every year, whether he comes or not, whether he likes it or not, because he's my blood. He deserves that chance, even if he never bestows it on others.

(beat)

Maybe, just maybe, I've infected him enough with that old Christmas spirit that he may give his clerk a bonus. And at least, isn't that something?

NIECE

Yes it would be.

FRED

I think I shook him up!

The room busts up laughing, making a gentle mockery of Scrooge. The hurt on Scrooge's face is quite evident.

The rest of the evening becomes a blur. The group talks, chats, and even plays games. Fred is having a grand old time, as is Scrooge's Niece, and the rest of the crowd.

Scrooge sits solemnly, watching, even smiling occasionally, but hurt at not being an active participant.

(CONTINUED)

After a while, the group begins to play a game of Trivial Pursuit. Even Scrooge chimes in a few botched answers here and there, but no one hears him. He gets the answers right, but hangs his head.

Present looks at Scrooge solemnly.

We blur ahead to a new game that the group is playing.

FRED

This is a game called yes or no. I'm thinking of something, and you can ask me any question, providing that it's a yes or no question. Any questions.

EVERYONE

No!

Laughter all around, even from Scrooge.

FRED

Let's begin.

NIECE

Are you thinking of an object?

FRED

No, not quite.

PLUMP SISTER #1

Are you thinking of something alive?

FRED

Yes, sort of.

GUEST #1

Ah, is it an animal?

FRED

Hmmm. . yes.

GUEST #1

A rugged animal?

FRED

(laughs)
Sure.

The group laughs.

GUEST #2

Is it a wild animal?

(CONTINUED)

FRED
Hmmm . . . yes.

NIECE
Is it a savage animal?

FRED
Yes.

SCROOGE
(yelling out)
Is it a bear?

GUEST #3
Is it a tiger?

FRED
Nope. Guess again.

NIECE
Wait, I need more information. Is it
in a zoo?

FRED
No.

NIECE
Are there types of this animal in
London?

FRED
Yes.

PLUMP SISTER #2
Is it a horse or an ass?

FRED
Neither.

GUEST #2
I got it... is it a pet?

FRED
No. It's not mastered by anyone.

GUEST #1
Is it extinct?

FRED
Come now, then it wouldn't be alive!

Everyone laughs.

(CONTINUED)

NIECE
Has it ever been killed in a market,
or served as food?

FRED
No, and no.

GUEST #1
Is it a bear?

Everyone laughs, for no apparent reason.

FRED
No, it's not a bear.

PLUMP SISTER #1
Ooooooh, I got it! I got it!

FRED
Pray tell.

Scrooge listens in.

SCROOGE
What is it?

PLUMP SISTER #1
It's your Uncle Scrooooooooooge!!

Everyone in the room cracks up. Scrooge's smile falters.
The laughter doesn't cease for a minute.

FRED
Correct.

GUEST #1
Hey, you said it wasn't a bear!

Everyone cracks up again.

GUEST #1 (cont'd)
You should have said yes to the bear
question.

FRED
Well...

Scrooge turns to the Spirit, while the laughter
continues.

SCROOGE
Spirit, I cannot take much more of
this.

(CONTINUED)

PRESENT

The eve is not gone, yet.

Back on the crowd, the plump sister stands up.

PLUMP SISTER #1

I got it right! I got it right!

A bullet comes zooming through the window and hits her directly between the eyes. A spray of blood streams over the guests, who recoil in shock. The plump sister falls with a 'thud'.

The front door is kicked open, and at least ten henchmen come walking through the door. They are all Asian, and they are all led by Takeuchi, the malevolent criminal we saw earlier.

Fred, the Niece, and the rest of the crowd back off in horror.

TAKEUCHI

(lighting a cigarette)

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature will be left alive, not even a mouse. Christmas is truly my favorite time of year. To hear such violent carols sung, from the rhythmic bullets pumping out of my gun. To see the snow fall red, the blood spilt from the dead, the gush of an opened head.

FRED

Who are you??

Scrooge tries to stop it.

SCROOGE

No! No...

The Ghost holds him back.

PRESENT

You cannot interfere. You do not exist to them, remember?

TAKEUCHI

In case you were wondering, we are associates of your Uncle Scrooge. We've decided to prompt him by giving his close relatives a present of our own.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

Please... what do you want from us?

Takeuchi opens fire on Fred. He spins around and around, being hit with bullets on every conceivable inch of his body. He hits the floor.

TAKEUCHI

Lyrical death.

The group opens fire on the crowd, much like the Fezziwig massacre. People are falling left and right.

The gangsters move around wildly, firing into every crevice of the home.

A young girl, no older than seven, runs into the hall, out of our sight. A gangster follows her into the hall, and we see blinding discharges from a machine gun.

One of the guests draws his guns, with incredible flair and style, and points them at one of the gangsters. Before he can squeeze out a shot, a bullet tears through his skull, from the gun of Mister Takeuchi, standing behind him.

The audio is muted, and the room is silent... as guns fire, as bullets enter flesh, we are deaf and numb to the whole scene... shell after shell is ejected, not a single one spared or saved. Slowly, the firing of the guns comes back in, but just that... gunfire. As we see the horror, and listen to the shots... they create a Christmas carol... a marching beat: a pistol shot, an automatic rifle, a bullet entering someone's skull. The chaos of death has been organized into a terrible opera... until the last gun screams out its final note.

The massacre is over within a minute. No one is left alive.

Takeuchi, still smoking his cigarette, looks at his handiwork. He stares at a wall, racked with bloodstains and bullet holes.

Takeuchi fires his gun into the wall, making a pattern... a dollar sign, in bullet holes, blood covering it.

TAKEUCHI

(to the dead people)
Oh, and Merry Christmas.

The gangsters exit.

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge walks amongst the remains of his "family".

SCROOGE

(whispering)

They didn't deserve this. It was me... they were after me...

(to Fred)

Nephew, you were so wrong. The consequences of my actions affect more than myself. I am so sorry...

(beat)

I would... I would give my own life, to have prevented this...

PRESENT

Would you? Or are your words empty?

SCROOGE

I don't know anymore.

(beat)

Why must the innocent suffer?

PRESENT

They always do.

The room morphs away again...

29 EXT. HIGH ROOFTOP - CLEAR SNOWY NIGHT

29

...into a rooftop high above the streets of London. The air blows cold, and the wind causes hearts to flap.

Scrooge looks out at the city below. He has no words.

PRESENT

My time here is short, Scrooge. Let me show you something.

She lifts up her robe... and from underneath, crawl out a boy and a girl, two ragged, hideous, filthy children. Their eyes are yellow, and they cling to the Spirit like she was their mother.

SCROOGE

Are they yours, Spirit?

PRESENT

No. These are mankind's, humankind's. The boy represents ignorance. The girl represents want.

Scrooge looks at the children. They stare back with a curious expression.

(CONTINUED)

PRESENT (cont' d)

You must beware of them both, but especially the boy. For ignorance presents doom, and that is where I see the future's chapter.

SCROOGE

But they are just children...

PRESENT

They grow quickly, and quicker still.

SCROOGE

How... how do I stop this?

The wind increases, and the Spirit begins to glow. The children vanish.

PRESENT

Look within yourself, Ebenezer Scrooge. One man cannot change the world, but he can start the reaction that does.

Scrooge turns, and looks out at the city...

...the city itself begins to morph, and it changes...

...into a haunted, dim, desolate city. The buildings are destroyed, and crumbling. The sky is a dark orange. The fields are a wasteland, a desert. Smoke arises and gunfire reigns wildly.

The wind blows in Scrooge's face. He has never seen such horror.

SCROOGE

(turning)
Spirit?

But the Spirit is gone... Scrooge is alone.

He sighs softly.

SCROOGE

In all my life, I have never seen the good in man. And now that I have, I'm maddened by the knowledge that any good present is destroyed by people like me.

Scrooge ponders...

(CONTINUED)

...when he notices movement behind him.

Scrooge turns around, and sees...

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE... a truly awesome, haunting specter. His tattered cloak and robes flow with invisible wind, and they glow with a supernatural aura. His face is cloaked by a dark hood, but underneath, we can see just enough: his face is marred horribly, and his eyes speak of pure hell. He carries a staff composed of souls.

Scrooge cannot but help drop to one knee at the sight.

The Spirit, towering over Scrooge, looks at him.

SCROOGE

Are you the Ghost of the Christmas yet to come?

The Spirit is silent. Scrooge stands.

SCROOGE (cont' d)

Are you to show me the shadows of the things that have not happened, but are yet to come?

The Spirit is silent.

SCROOGE (cont' d)

Ghost of the Future, I fear you. But I know that your presence will teach me, albeit a difficult lesson to learn. I am thankful, and I am ready.

The Spirit nods slowly.

The environment begins to morph again...

30 INT. DARK HALLWAY - APOCALYPTIC FUTURE

30

...into an incredible hallway. The ceilings are arched, and tower many stories above the rest. The windows are beautifully framed, but the picture they frame, that of the outside world, shows the same ruined world, with the same dark orange sky.

The Spirit moves slowly down the hall. Scrooge is inclined to follow.

They pass several gentlemen enjoying a pipe in the hallway. One of them is quite fat, and one of them has a large chin.

(CONTINUED)

FAT MAN
I heard he died last night.

CHIN MAN
Really? How?

FAT MAN
Who knows, and who cares. It's about
damn time.

CHIN MAN
Who did he leave his estate to?

FAT MAN
Not me!

They laugh, darkly.

Scrooge gives them a stare, and continues following the
Specter.

They come to an opening, to the outside world... and walk
through.

31 EXT. LONDON STREET - APOCALYPTIC FUTURE

31

Scrooge passes more people talking.

BUSINESSMAN #1
Hello there!

BUSINESSMAN #2
Hey, did you hear? The bastard
finally got what's coming to him.
He's dead.

BUSINESSMAN #1
No shit? My, it's cold today...

BUSINESSMAN #2
...yeah, I've got to run home...

Scrooge continues on past them.

At the end of the street is a hilly patch of grass, with
an elegant gateway. It is the only vegetation we have
seen in this future.

The Spirit turns to Scrooge, and raises his cloak. When
the cloak drops, the setting has changed...

32 INT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - APOCALYPTIC FUTURE

32

We're inside Cratchit's house. It is so far desecrated that there's no way anyone, not even Scrooge could tell. Candles hang on bare, torn walls. The furniture that was once here is gone, or broken. The hue of the flames is incredibly morbid.

SCROOGE

Spirit, where are we?

Mrs. Cratchit walks into the room. Her daughter, Martha, is with her.

MARTHA

Mommy, why does Daddy walk so slowly?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Martha, your father... he's not feeling that well.

MARTHA

Is Daddy going to be okay?

MRS. CRATCHIT

(trembling)
Yes. He'll be okay.

They hear a door slam.

MRS. CRATCHIT (cont'd)

Quick, go to your room, Daddy's home.

Little Martha runs off.

Bob Cratchit walks into the room, slowly. He looks like death warmed over.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Bob?

CRATCHIT

Hi.

They hug. She caresses his face softly.

MRS. CRATCHIT

How are you feeling?

CRATCHIT

I'm fine. I'm fine.

Cratchit stops, and pulls aside to look at his wife.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. CRATCHIT
It's Sunday today. Did you go?

CRATCHIT
(hushed)
Yes. I just came. I wish you would have come with me. To see how green a place it was... oh, so green. Such beauty is scarce nowadays.

MRS. CRATCHIT
I'm not ready, Robert.

Cratchit is near tears. He's fighting them back.

CRATCHIT
I'm not ready, either. Lord only knows.

MRS. CRATCHIT
We hoped, Robert. Hope. Hope is the only thing we have left.

CRATCHIT
We're past hope. I... I went over the paperwork today. We're ruined. We're broke. We can't keep this place.

MRS. CRATCHIT
Will he relent? If such a miracle is still possible.

CRATCHIT
He won't relent. He's dead.

MRS. CRATCHIT
What?

CRATCHIT
Hope died with them.

MRS. CRATCHIT
That's not true, Bob! Perhaps the fates will smile upon us, and we can find someone more merciful...

CRATCHIT
I would give it all up... all of it... everything I own, everything I am...

Cratchit breaks down in tears. He falls to his knees and sobs.

(CONTINUED)

CRATCHIT

Oh, my child, my poor, poor child. My
son! My son, oh, my poor, poor, son!
Little child! Oh, he was innocent!

(screams)

He was innocent!!

Mrs. Cratchit kneels down, and comforts her husband.

The Spirit raises his cloak again... and when it drops...

...they are in the cemetery, the 'patch of green' at the
end of the street with the elegant gateway.

Tombstones and crosses line the small hill. The orange
skies surround them.

Scrooge looks around, and sees a giant oak tree...

...with a small crutch resting besides it.

Scrooge sees it, and his eyes widen...

SCROOGE

No... not... Tiny Tim!

The Cratchit family comes on-screen, all of them. They
carry toys, flowers, cards...

SCROOGE

They can't afford a thing, and yet,
they bring gifts for their son...

One by one the Cratchits place the items by the lone
crutch. Then they leave one by one, except for Bob and
Mrs. Cratchit.

Mrs. Cratchit, crying softly, gives her husband a kiss,
and walks off with the children.

Bob Cratchit is finished. There's nothing left of him to
behold. He grabs the crutch and holds it against his
chest. And he cries out to the Heavens, with all of his
might, until his breath wanes...

Cratchit replaces the crutch against the tree, and walks
off with his head down. He will never hold it up again.

Scrooge walks over to the crutch, and the Spirit follows.

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge, despite being invisible, tries to pick up the crutch. His hands pass through it.

A tear rolls out of Scrooge's eye.

He gently tries to caress the edge of the crutch, but isn't able to. He repeats the motion.

SCROOGE

I'm so sorry...

Scrooge gathers himself and looks at the fearful spirit.

SCROOGE

Spirit, this has not yet happened?
Can it be prevented? Tell me, can it
be prevented? Anything! Please!

The Spirit points a long finger at a grave nearby. It is being filled with dirt by a gravedigger.

Scrooge walks over to the grave. The coffin is a mahogany wood, and almost totally covered in dirt.

SCROOGE

Who lies in this grave?

He looks for a gravestone. There is none.

The Spirit approaches him.

SCROOGE

Spirit, who's grave is this?

The Spirit looks at him. It points a long finger at Scrooge.

Scrooge is emotionless, and he stares down at the grave.

SCROOGE

I deserve it.
(he closes his eyes)
There's no gravestone. Why is there
no gravestone?

The Spirit does not answer.

SCROOGE

Because no one cared. No one
remembers me, no one showed emotion at
my death. I've never cared...
...about death, my death. But no one
else did either. I am insignificant!

(CONTINUED)

He looks back at Tiny Tim's crutch.

SCROOGE (cont'd)
But you were special, young Master
Tim. And you deserved to be
cherished. You deserved to be
recognized. You deserved the chance
that I blew.

The wind blows on Scrooge's face.

SCROOGE
So long as I have the power to change
things, I will, so help me God. I
will keep Christmas in my heart. I
will remember the past, cherish the
present, and prepare for the future.
I want the chance to change, Spirit.

Scrooge grabs the Spirit's hand. It glows with anger.
Scrooge holds on tight, determined. The Spirit attempts
to break Scrooge's hold on it...

ALL WHITE.

CRASH IN:

34 INT. SCROOGE'S CHAMBERS - SNOWY CHRISTMAS MORNING 34

Scrooge startles awake from slumber. He looks up at the
window. A startled smile of wonder creeps upon his face:
the window, still open, is blowing in snow, but it is
blowing in sunshine as well! Just a little ray of
sunshine through the clouds...

Scrooge leaps up and goes to his window, and looks down
at the street below: hundreds of people, walking,
talking, celebrating. The sky is blue and grey, and the
snowfall is beautiful.

Scrooge laughs, a hearty laugh, and jumps in the air like
a schoolboy. Spotting a teenage boy down below, he calls
out to him.

SCROOGE
(yelling)
Hello there!

TEEN
Hello!

SCROOGE
What day is it, my lad?

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

TEEN
Pardon me, sir?

SCROOGE
What is today?

TEEN
Why... it's Christmas Day!

Scrooge lets loose a huge smile.

SCROOGE
Thank you, my boy, and a terrific
fellow you are! Thank you!

Scrooge pulls back inside.

SCROOGE
Why, it's not too late! It's
Christmas Day! I have another chance!
Oh glorious Christmas!

He even does a little dance!

Losing no time at all, Scrooge races into his bathroom.

35 INT. SCROOGE'S BATHROOM

35

An old bathroom which matches the look of the house.
Scrooge lathers up, and pulls out a straight razor. With
a smile on his face, he shaves as quickly as he can...

...and in series of dizzying movements, he gets ready.
Buttons his collar, puts on a sharp tie, buckles his
belt, ties his shoes, and finally, arms his gun holsters.
He then buttons his coat, and puts on his hat.

Scrooge looks happier and sharper than we've ever seen
him.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. LONDON STREETS - SNOWY CHRISTMAS MORNING

36

Ebenezer Scrooge is out on the town. He walks with
flair, tipping his hat, and saying hello to practically
everyone he meets.

SCROOGE
Merry Christmas, merry Christmas! Oh
what a day, oh what a day!

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

He throws a young boy a golden coin. The boy's face lights up, and he runs off.

Scrooge spots a poultry shop, and there's a marvelous turkey hanging in the front window. He gleefully trots inside.

After a moment of conversation, he struts back outside, rubbing his hands, and laughing to himself.

CUT TO:

37 INT. FRED'S HOME - SNOWY CHRISTMAS MORNING

37

Fred and Scrooge's Niece are inside, having a cup of morning coffee, and reading the paper.

There is a knock on the door.

FRED

Who could that be, on Christmas morning?

Fred gets up, and goes to answer the door.

Uncle Scrooge is standing outside with a worried look on his face. Upon seeing Fred, he breaks into a terrific grin.

SCROOGE

Nephew! You're alive! Thank God!

Scrooge grabs Fred, and gives him a powerful bearhug. Fred almost chokes. Scrooge spins around with Fred in his arms.

FRED

Uncle Scrooge?!

Scrooge lets him down, and holds him by the shoulders.

FRED

(beat)

Uncle Scrooge?

SCROOGE

A second chance! They've given me a second chance, Fred!

FRED

They have?

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

Yes, dear nephew, they have, and I'm going to take full advantage of it, the more the merrier! Merry Christmas, Fred!

FRED

Uh... wow. Merry Christmas to you, good Uncle!

SCROOGE

I stopped by to ask if I may come to dinner tonight!

The Niece's jaw drops.

FRED

(stammering)

Uh...uh... well, of course you can! I'm so delighted!

SCROOGE

Believe me, not as much as I! Oh, Fred, you're alive! And well! It's not too late!

FRED

What are you talking about Uncle Scrooge?

SCROOGE

Nothing, Fred, just the rantings of a delirious old man! I'll see you at dinner, when the bell tolls eight!

FRED

We'll be here! Yes, we'll be here!

Fred laughs, out of pure surprise. Scrooge laughs with him... and exits laughing.

Fred shuts the door, and shakes his head in disbelief.

NIECE

No!

FRED

He's been smoking something good, that's for sure.

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. TOY STORE - SNOWY CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON 38

A clerk looks up, to see Scrooge walk in the door.

CLERK
Mi ster Scrooge??

SCROOGE
My good man, are you open?

CLERK
I'm sorry, sir, no, it's Christmas.

Scrooge pulls out an enormous wad of cash.

SCROOGE
Yes, it is...

The two men delve into a discussion...

DISSOLVE TO:

39 INT. GROCERY STORE - SNOWY CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON 39

Scrooge strolls in, and spots a grocer.

SCROOGE
(loudly)
Hello there!

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - SNOWY CHRISTMAS MORNING 40

Bob Cratchit is relaxing in his chair, when there is a loud knocking at the door.

The rest of the family comes out... and look at the door.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Cratchit gets up, and opens the door.

Ebenezer Scrooge is standing outside, with the sternest of looks upon his face.

SCROOGE
Cratchit.

CRATCHIT
Mi ster Scrooge?

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

I have some work for you to do.

CRATCHIT

But sir, it's Christmas!

Mrs. Cratchit comes around the corner.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Bob, who is it?

CRATCHIT

No one, dear, go back inside.

SCROOGE

No one?!

(sternly)

My lady, please approach.

Mrs. Cratchit comes to the door, and a shocked look creeps upon her face.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Of all the nerve!

CRATCHIT

No, no, no, it's okay.

SCROOGE

No it's not okay! I won't stand for this sort of thing any longer, Cratchit!

Cratchit looks down, preparing for the inevitable.

SCROOGE

I hate to do this Cratchit! But it's for the best, and believe me, it will hurt me more than it hurts you!

(beat)

I'm giving you a raise.

Cratchit slowly looks up... the look on his face is priceless.

Scrooge's stern demeanor creeps into a smile.

SCROOGE

Well?

CRATCHIT

.. a... r-r... raise?

(CONTINUED)

SCROOGE

You heard me, man! A raise.

Cratchit breaks into a huge smile.

CRATCHIT

Why, Mister Scrooge...

Mrs. Cratchit puts her hands over her mouth.

Young Tiny Tim comes peering around the corner, and holds on to Cratchit's leg.

TINY TIM

Father, who is it?

Scrooge kneels down and looks at Tiny Tim. He grins, and playfully touches his nose.

SCROOGE

My name is Ebenezer, young master.
And what's yours?

TINY TIM

Tim, sir.

Scrooge picks Tiny Tim up, and looks at him with smoldering eyes. He looks down at Tiny Tim's leg.

SCROOGE

What happened to that leg, sport?

TINY TIM

It was hurt in an accident, sir.

Scrooge looks over at Cratchit.

SCROOGE

I've bought corporate insurance. Full
benefits, for all employees.
Effective tomorrow.

CRATCHIT

Oh my God.
(he looks at his wife)
...the operation!

Mrs. Cratchit's face is red. She's crying.

Tiny Tim looks at Scrooge. And he hugs him.

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge almost falls down. He staggers. Despite his outward joy, he is so taken aback by this simple gesture... the look on his face is priceless.

He looks at Tiny Tim, and runs his hand through his hair.

SCROOGE

We're gonna get you fixed up, Timothy Cratchit. Things are going to do nothing but get better from here.

TINY TIM

Are you an angel?

SCROOGE

No. Not even close. But I'm trying.

Tiny Tim turns his head, and looks outside.

TINY TIM

Ebenezer, who are all those men?

Scrooge steps outside with Tiny Tim, and the rest of the Cratchits follow. Everyone gasps.

41 EXT. CRATCHIT'S HOUSE - SNOWY CHRISTMAS MORNING

41

...for standing outside are three men, each with something different which they carry. A man holding a great turkey. A man with a bag filled with presents. A man with baker's bread, fruit, and suckling pig.

SCROOGE

Come now, go inside! Set up the greatest Christmas feast of all time!

MRS. CRATCHIT

(flustered)

Uh.. right this way!

Everyone goes inside, cheering. Scrooge looks at Tiny Tim, and then looks at Cratchit.

SCROOGE

Merry Christmas, Bob.

Cratchit has no words. He grabs Scrooge and gives him a hug. Even Tiny Tim hugs them.

CRATCHIT

(whispering)

God bless you.

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge lets up, and lets Tiny Tim down.

SCROOGE

(to Tim)

Go inside with your family. The presents are waiting for you.

Tiny Tim smiles, and runs off inside.

SCROOGE

Things that I've done and not done, said and not said, have made your life hell, Bob. I want to change that.

CRATCHIT

You've done more for me today that words could allow for gratitude, sir.

SCROOGE

Your expression speaks for you. And to be bluntly honest, I've never felt this good in my life. It doesn't rectify my sins, but for what it's worth, I'm sorry.

CRATCHIT

No need, sir.

SCROOGE

I'm giving you a partnership, and we're going legal. The business will suffer, for a time, but it's the right thing to do. And for you, it means more money and less worries.

CRATCHIT

Why? Not that I would dare, upon the Heavens, look a gift horse in the mouth. But why?

SCROOGE

I owe it to you. I owe it to myself. And I owe it to Tiny Tim. I'm going to start living.

Tiny Tim runs back outside. Scrooge kneels down again, and picks him up.

SCROOGE

Why did you come back out? The presents are inside.

(CONTINUED)

TINY TIM
I don't want presents.

Cratchit's jaw starts trembling.

SCROOGE
You live, Tim. You grow up, and grow
up strong.

Scrooge gently runs his fingers through Tim's hair.

TINY TIM
I will.

Tiny Tim turns his head back the other way...

TINY TIM
Ebenezer, who are all those men?

We can see the three hired men walking out of the house,
and walking off in the background. They wave to Mrs.
Cratchit, who stands at the front door, smiling.

Scrooge looks at Tiny Tim and smiles.

SCROOGE
Those are the men who brought your
Christmas feast and presents. They're
my friends.

TINY TIM
No... those men.

Scrooge turns head to look the other way...

...and spots Takeuchi, and four more armed men heading
towards them.

SCROOGE
(whispered)
No...

Scrooge lets Tiny Tim down in a hurry.

SCROOGE
Run inside, lock the door, and tell
your family not to come out here at
any cost. Go, now!
(to Cratchit)
You go inside, too. Don't come out
here, no matter what.

Tiny Tim hobbles over as quickly as he can...

(CONTINUED)

CRATCHIT

I'm staying.

Mrs. Cratchit, in the B.G., shrieks.

Takeuchi starts firing rounds...

Tiny Tim, being surpassed by a hail of bullets, makes it safely inside... Mrs. Cratchit watches in horror, and closes the door partially for safety, keeping it open to watch the welfare of her husband.

Scrooge and Cratchit run and dive behind Cratchit's porch. The porch is torn apart with bullets.

Scrooge looks at Cratchit. He draws both of his guns. He tosses one of them to Cratchit.

SCROOGE

Ah, Christmas memories.

The two men pop up, and start firing at will.

They leap over the porch wall, nailing two of the men in the process.

Cratchit runs like mad, barely making it behind a thick tree.

Scrooge fires repeatedly, but doesn't hit anything.

Takeuchi takes position behind a lamppost, and fires bursts.

A gunman surprises Scrooge from behind; Scrooge wheels and nails him between the eyes.

Tiny Tim, in the background, comes peering around his mother's leg. Through the crack in the door, he watches in horror.

Cratchit sees one of the gunmen running, and fires several shots. The gunman is hit in the leg, but makes it to safety.

Takeuchi comes out from his spot and opens fire... everywhere. Scrooge fires back.

Takeuchi looks, and sees Tiny Tim in the crack of the door. Scrooge sees Tiny Tim. Cratchit sees Tiny Tim.

Takeuchi aims for Tiny Tim...

(CONTINUED)

...Cratchit runs to save Tim..

CRATCHIT

Tim!!

...Scrooge is about to run out... when the wounded gunman appears, and shoot Scrooge in the shoulder. Scrooge's return shot nails him in the neck.

Takeuchi fires, two rounds. He's out.

The first shot misses. The second nails Cratchit in the gun arm. His pistol goes flying out.

He falls to the ground with a wail.

Takeuchi, quickly but stylishly, reloads. He walks over to the fallen Cratchit, cocks the weapons, and holds it under Cratchit's neck.

Tiny Tim sees this, and runs out as fast as he can go.

TINY TIM

Father!

Mrs. Cratchit screams with all her might, her hand outstretched reaching for her son...

MRS. CRATCHIT

Tim!!

Tiny Tim walks right over to Takeuchi.

TINY TIM

Please don't shoot my father! It's Christmas, sir!

SCROOGE (O. S.)

Yes, Takeuchi, it's Christmas.

Scrooge, wounded but alert, has his gun trained on Takeuchi.

TAKEUCHI

Mister Scrooge. It appears I have underestimated you, and your colleagues.

SCROOGE

You arrogant fuck. How dare you. How dare you do this to me!

(CONTINUED)

TAKEUCHI
You had it coming Scrooge!

SCROOGE
I've changed. I am no longer the man
I used to be. He's dead.

TAKEUCHI
Yes he is. We're all dead, Mister
Scrooge.

Takeuchi's finger moves to pull the trigger.

Scrooge shoots Takeuchi in the chest. Takeuchi falls
into the snow.

Tiny Tim runs over and hugs his father.

Scrooge recoils in horror.

SCROOGE
Have I changed?

Tiny Tim and Cratchit look at Scrooge. Standing there,
smoking gun in hand.

...and in the trauma of the moment, Takeuchi lifts his
head up. He's still alive.

He brings his focus upon Tiny Tim, and swings his machine
gun over...

...Scrooge sees this, and pulls the trigger on his own
gun. Click. Empty.

Scrooge runs in a mad dash to save Tiny Tim..

...Cratchit sees, and shoots.

Takeuchi gets it in the head. He's dead. His gun falls
down to the ground...

Scrooge dives...

...Takeuchi's gun discharges a single round.

Scrooge shoves Tiny Tim and Cratchit out of the way...

...and takes a bullet straight to heart.

What happens next is a jumble, a limbo between time and
space: Tiny Tim and Cratchit fall, unhurt...

(CONTINUED)

Scrooge however, falls, bleeding. His blood stains the snow. He twists, and falls on his back, sliding across the snowy pavement.

Cratchit runs over to Scrooge, and places his hand on the wound. The bleeding won't stop.

CRATCHIT
Mister Scrooge...

SCROOGE
Bob... the money's yours. Save your family. Put it to use. Do with it what I could not... innocence will live on...

CRATCHIT
Oh, Jesus no...

Scrooge dies. His form lies still upon the ground.

Tiny Tim walks over, and takes Scrooge's limp hand.

A tear falls on Scrooge's hand.

Cratchit and Tiny Tim stand over Scrooge's body.

The sun no longer shines on London, and the gray is awash with the snow of Christmas day.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 EXT. LONDON STREETS - OVERCAST AFTERNOON

42

We move through the streets of London, with the old cemetery ahead of us, same grassy hill, same elegant gateway.

But something's different. There's a crowd of people there.

We see two businessmen talking in front of us.

BUSINESSMAN #1
I heard Scrooge died.

BUSINESSMAN #2
You'd never believe it. Died saving a boy's life. Left all his money to the Cratchits.

BUSINESSMAN #1
My God, you're kidding?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

Their voices fade out...

43 INT. CEMETERY - OVERCAST AFTERNOON

43

As we move up upon the burial of old Ebenezer Scrooge, the sun does not shine, and it does not snow.

Everyone is there. The entire Cratchit family, dressed nicely. Fred, and Scrooge's Niece. Many onlookers who have come to pay their last respects.

The gravestone is clearly marked: EBENEZER SCROOGE.

Most of the crowd clears out, all except Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim. Tiny Tim puts a card, and a rose on Scrooge's grave. His leg is no longer in a cast, but freshly bandaged. He walks with a cane, not a crutch.

TINY TIM

Father?

CRATCHIT

Yes, Tim?

TINY TIM

Is it true what they say about Uncle Ebenezer? That he was a horrible man.

CRATCHIT

You know that's not true.

TINY TIM

I know.

CRATCHIT

Ebenezer Scrooge was just a man. And a good man, Tim. We shall never forget him.

Suddenly, a gun is pointed at Cratchit's head.

GRUFF VOICE (O. S.)

Give me your money.

Cratchit steps back, to see the owner of that gun. It's a surly-looking man, the same one we saw at the beginning of the film.

The surly man cocks the gun.

SURLY MAN

Don't make me ask twice.

(CONTINUED)

CRATCHIT

We don't have any money!

SURLY MAN

Oh yes you do. Scrooge left you his entire fortune!

CRATCHIT

I don't have any money on me!

TINY TIM

Leave my father alone! We're here to pay our respects!

SURLY MAN

Kid, shut the fuck up!

CRATCHIT

Don't you--

SURLY MAN

Don't you even try me, motherfucker!
Give-me-your-money!

Cratchit starts sweating bullets.

Tiny Tim looks at the surly man... there's a second gun lodged into his belt.

Tiny Tim grabs it, and points it at the surly man.

TINY TIM

Let my Father go!

The surly man looks completely surprised. He gets a bit nervous, but then looks at Tim and submits a false smile.

SURLY MAN

Easy there, kid... just take it easy, and give me the gun, and I won't have to shoot your father in the head.

TINY TIM

You're not gonna shoot anyone! Let my father go, and get out here!

SURLY MAN

Give me the gun, child. Give it to me before you hurt yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CRATCHIT
(calmly as he can)
Tim.. Tim.. walk away. Get out of
here.

TINY TIM
I'm not leaving you to die, Father!

SURLY MAN
Kid, give me the gun before you hurt
someone. I've got your precious
father under trigger.

TINY TIM
Let him go! Let him go!

The surly man grabs Tim's gun with his free hand, and
yanks hard... Tim fights back... the gun is going back
and forth...

SURLY MAN
Kid, don't make me use--

A gunshot rings out. All of London is silent.

A moment's pause... to Tim, horrified. To the Surly Man,
stunned. To Cratchit, shocked.

Slowly, the blood starts to trickle onto the grassy
knoll...

...and the surly man puts his hand to his chest. He
falls, to his knees, and collapses on the ground, a
gaping wound in his heart.

Little Tiny Tim holds the smoldering gun, and he drops
it. It hits the ground cleanly, stained with blood,
wisps of smoke and gunpowder rising from the cold.

Tiny Tim stares blankly, but he does not cry. He stands
there, expressionless. No words can describe what he
now feels. No words can describe what has just taken
place.

Cratchit takes Tim and holds him close. He looks to the
sky, and pleads with his eyes.

It begins to rain. The bloodstains don't wash away.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END