

# A Christmas Carol



Video link at [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com)

Novel by Charles Dickens

Dramatized by Frederick Gaines

## How important is **MONEY?**

### COMMON CORE

**RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. **RL 3** Analyze how particular elements of a drama interact. **RL 5** Analyze how a drama's form contributes to its meaning.

People say, "Money makes the world go round," "Show me the money," and "Time is money." But they also say, "You can't buy happiness." There are many sayings about what money can and can't do, about what it is and what it isn't. In *A Christmas Carol*, the main character's opinion about what it means to be wealthy changes drastically by the end of the play.

**QUOTE IT** Read over the four sayings quoted in the previous paragraph. In a chart, jot down your ideas about what each saying means. Then write your own saying on the last line, expressing your thoughts about money.

Saying	What It Means
1	
2	
3	
4	
My Saying:	



## Meet the Author

### Charles Dickens

1812–1870

#### Unhappy Childhood

Charles Dickens's childhood in England provided material for many of his stories. When Dickens was 12 and living with his family in London, his father was put in prison for not paying his debts. Young Dickens had to leave school to work in a rat-infested factory to help earn money for his family. The hopelessness and shame he felt there affected him deeply.

#### BACKGROUND TO THE DRAMA

##### A Plea for the Poor

When Frederick Gaines wrote the play you are about to read, he based it on a novel by the same name that Charles Dickens first published in 1843. At that time, about one-third of the people in London were living in poverty and hunger. The city was dirty and overcrowded, and jobs and houses were in short supply. Many children were forced to work instead of staying in school. Charles Dickens wanted his novel *A Christmas Carol* to be “a plea for the poor.” The book was instantly and widely popular, and as Dickens had hoped, it and his other writings did affect how his readers felt about the social conditions of their time.

### ● TEXT ANALYSIS: THEME IN DRAMA

To identify the **theme** in a drama, notice the action and **dialogue** between characters. What characters do and say provides clues to the play's message. Characters' actions, the setting, and events are often explained in **stage directions**, which are set off in parentheses.

As you read *A Christmas Carol*, try to focus not only on what the characters say and do but also on how and why they say and do those things. Then ask yourself what message the playwright is sharing.

### ● READING SKILL: UNDERSTAND SEQUENCE IN PLOT

Knowing the order of events in a work of literature helps you better understand the work's theme. Events are not always presented in the order in which they happen. The reader may be taken backward or forward in time.

In a drama, clues about the order, or **sequence**, of events often appear in the stage directions. The titles of the scenes also provide clues about the sequence of events.

As you read *A Christmas Carol*, use a sequence wheel to help you keep track of the unusual sequence of events.



### ▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The following words all help tell the story of a man who is too concerned with money. How many words can you match with their definition?

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 1. accost     | a. abrupt or blunt in speaking           |
| 2. anonymous  | b. made very angry                       |
| 3. brusque    | c. not having one's name known           |
| 4. currency   | d. to approach and speak unpleasantly to |
| 5. incoherent | e. money                                 |
| 6. infuriated | f. confused                              |



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# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

**Charles Dickens**  
dramatized by Fred Gaines

## CHARACTERS

**Carolers, Families, Dancers**

**First Boy**

**Second Boy**

**Third Boy**

**Girl with a doll**

**Ebenezer Scrooge**

**Bob Cratchit**, Scrooge's clerk

**Fred**, Scrooge's nephew

**Gentleman Visitor**

**Warder and Residents  
of the Poorhouse**

**Sparsit**, Scrooge's servant

**Cook**

**Charwoman**

**Jacob Marley**

**Priest**

**Leper**

**First Spirit**, the Spirit  
of Christmas Past

**Jack Walton**

**Ben Benjamin**

**Child Scrooge**

**Fan**, Scrooge's sister

**Fezziwig**

**Young Ebenezer**

**Dick Wilkins**

**Sweetheart of Young  
Ebenezer**

**Second Spirit**, the Spirit  
of Christmas Present

**Poorhouse Children**

**Mrs. Cratchit**

**Several Cratchit Children**

**Tiny Tim**

**Beggar Children**, Hunger  
and Ignorance

**Third Spirit**, the Spirit  
of Christmas Yet to Come

**Peter**, a Cratchit child

**Boy**

**Butcher**

**Coachman**



## PROLOGUE

*The play begins amid a swirl of street life in Victorian London. Happy groups pass; brightly costumed carolers and families call out to one another and sing “Joy to the World.” Three boys and a girl are grouped about a glowing mound of coal. As the carolers leave the stage, the lights dim and the focus shifts to the mound of coals, bright against the dark. Slowly, the children begin to respond to the warmth. A piano plays softly*

10 *as the children talk.*

**First Boy.** I saw a horse in a window. (*pause*)  
A dapple . . . gray and white. And a saddle, too  
. . . red. And a strawberry mane down to here.  
All new. Golden stirrups. (*People pass by the  
children, muttering greetings to one another.*)

**Second Boy.** Christmas Eve.

**Third Boy.** Wish we could go.

**First Boy.** So do I.

**Third Boy.** I think I’d like it.

20 **First Boy.** Oh, wouldn’t I . . . wouldn’t I!

**Second Boy.** We’re going up onto the roof.  
(*The boys look at him quizzically.*) My father  
has a glass. Telescope. A brass one. It opens up

and it has twists on it and an eyepiece that you  
put up to look through. We can see all the way  
to the park with it.

**Third Boy.** Could I look through it?

**Second Boy.** Maybe . . . where would you look?  
(*The third boy points straight up.*) Why there?

30 **Third Boy.** I’d like to see the moon.  
(*The boys stand and look upward as the girl  
sings to her doll. One of the boys makes a snow  
angel on the ground.*)

**Girl** (*singing*).

Christ the King came down one day,  
Into this world of ours,  
And crying from a manger bed,  
Began the Christmas hour.

(*speaking*)

40 Christ the King, my pretty one,  
Sleep softly on my breast,  
Christ the King, my gentle one,  
Show us the way to rest.

(*She begins to sing the first verse again. As snow  
starts to fall on the boy making the snow angel, he  
stands up and reaches out to catch a single flake.*)

# SCENE I

## ~ SCROOGE IN HIS SHOP ~

*The percussion<sup>1</sup> thunders. Scrooge hurls himself through the descending snowflakes and sends the children scattering. They retreat, watching. Cratchit comes in. He takes some coal from the mound and puts it into a small bucket; as he carries it to a corner of the stage, the stage area is transformed from street to office. Scrooge's nephew Fred enters, talks with the children, gives them coins, and sends them away with*  
10 *a "Merry Christmas."*

**Fred.** A Merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

**Scrooge.** Bah! Humbug!

**Fred.** Christmas a humbug, Uncle? I hope that's meant as a joke.

**Scrooge.** Well, it's not. Come, come, what is it you want? Don't waste all the day, Nephew.

**Fred.** I only want to wish you a Merry Christmas, Uncle. Don't be cross.

20 **Scrooge.** What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out with Merry Christmas! What's Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money, a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

**Fred.** Uncle!

30 **Scrooge.** Nephew, keep Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine.

**Fred.** But you don't keep it.

**Scrooge.** Let me leave it alone then. Much good may it do you. Much good it has ever done you.

**Fred.** There are many things from which I

might have derived good by which I have not profited, I daresay, Christmas among the rest. And though it has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe it has done me good and will do me good, and I say, God bless it!

40 **Scrooge.** Bah!

**Fred.** Don't be angry, Uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

**Scrooge.** I'll dine alone, thank you.

**Fred.** But why?

**Scrooge.** Why? Why did you get married?

**Fred.** Why, because I fell in love with a wonderful girl.

**Scrooge.** And I with solitude. Good afternoon.

50 **Fred.** Nay, Uncle, but you never came to see me before I was married. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

**Scrooge.** Good afternoon.

**Fred.** I am sorry with all my heart to find you so determined; but I have made the attempt in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep that good spirit to the last. So, a Merry Christmas, Uncle.

**Scrooge.** Good afternoon!

**Fred.** And a Happy New Year!

60 **Scrooge.** Good afternoon! (Fred *hesitates as if to say something more. He sees that Scrooge has gone to get a volume down from the shelf, and so he starts to leave. As he leaves, the doorbell rings.*) Bells. Is it necessary to always have bells? (The gentleman visitor *enters, causing the doorbell to ring again.*) Cratchit!

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir?

**Scrooge.** The bell, fool! See to it!

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir. (He goes to the entrance.)

1. **percussion:** noise made by loudly striking objects, such as drums or cymbals.



**Scrooge** (*muttering*). Merry Christmas . . .  
70 Wolves howling and a Merry Christmas . . .

**Cratchit**. It's for you, sir.

**Scrooge**. Of course it's for me. You're not receiving callers, are you? Show them in.

**Cratchit**. Right this way, sir. (*The gentleman visitor approaches Scrooge.*)

**Scrooge**. Yes, yes?

**Gentleman Visitor**. Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

80 **Scrooge**. Marley's dead. Seven years tonight. What is it you want?

**Gentleman Visitor**. I have no doubt that his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner. Here, sir, my card. (*He hands Scrooge his business card.*)

**Scrooge**. Liberality? No doubt of it? All right, all right, I can read. What is it you want?  
(*He returns to his work.*)

**Gentleman Visitor**. At this festive season  
90 of the year . . .

**Scrooge**. It's winter and cold. (*He continues his work and ignores the gentleman visitor.*)

**Gentleman Visitor**. Yes . . . yes, it is, and the more reason for my visit. At this time of the year it is more than usually desirable to make some slight provision for the poor and destitute<sup>2</sup> who suffer greatly from the cold. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in  
100 want of common comforts, sir.

**Scrooge**. Are there no prisons?

**Gentleman Visitor**. Many, sir.

**Scrooge**. And the workhouse?<sup>3</sup> Is it still in operation?

**Gentleman Visitor**. It is; still, I wish I could say it was not.

**Scrooge**. The poor law is still in full vigor then?

**Gentleman Visitor**. Yes, sir.

**Scrooge**. I'm glad to hear it. From what  
110 you said, I was afraid someone had stopped its operation.

**Gentleman Visitor**. Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is the time, of all others, when want is keenly felt and abundance rejoices.<sup>4</sup> May I put you down for  
120 something, sir?

**Scrooge** (*retreating into the darkness temporarily*). Nothing.

**Gentleman Visitor**. You wish to be **anonymous**?

**Scrooge**. I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, sir, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help support the establishments I have mentioned . . . they cost enough . . . and those who are poorly off  
130 must go there.

**Gentleman Visitor**. Many can't go there, and many would rather die.

**Scrooge**. If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population. That is not my affair. My business is. It occupies me constantly. (*He talks both to the gentleman visitor and to himself while he thumbs through his books.*) Ask a man to give up life and means . . . fine thing. What is it, I want to know? Charity?  
140 . . . (*His nose deep in his books, he vaguely hears the dinner bell being rung in the workhouse; he*

2. **destitute**: people lacking the necessities of life.

3. **workhouse**: an establishment in which poor people are housed and required to do work.

4. **abundance rejoices**: those with wealth are happy.

looks up as if he has heard it but never focuses on the actual scene. The warder of the poorhouse stands in a pool of light at the far left, slowly ringing a bell.)

**Warder.** Dinner. All right. Line up. (*The poorly clad, dirty residents of the poorhouse line up and file by to get their evening dish of gruel,<sup>5</sup> wordlessly accepting it and going back to eat listlessly in the gloom. Scrooge returns to the business of his office.*

150 *The procession continues for a moment, then the image of the poorhouse is obscured by darkness. The dejected gentleman visitor exits.*)

**Scrooge.** Latch the door, Cratchit. Firmly, firmly. Draft as cold as Christmas blowing in here.

Charity! (*Cratchit goes to the door, starts to close it, then sees the little girl with the doll. She seems to beckon to him; he moves slowly toward her, and they dance together for a moment. Scrooge continues to work. Suddenly carolers appear on the*

160 *platform, and a few phrases of their carol, "Angels We Have Heard on High," are heard. Scrooge looks up.*) Cratchit! (*As soon as Scrooge shouts, the girl and the carolers vanish and Cratchit begins to close up the shop.*) Cratchit!

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir.

**Scrooge.** Well, to work then!

**Cratchit.** It's evening, sir.

**Scrooge.** Is it?

**Cratchit.** Christmas evening, sir.

170 **Scrooge.** Oh, you'll want all day tomorrow off, I suppose.

**Cratchit.** If it's quite convenient, sir.

**Scrooge.** It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I was to deduct half a crown<sup>6</sup> from your salary for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, wouldn't you? Still you expect me to pay a day's wage for a day of no work.

**Cratchit.** It's only once a year, sir.

**Scrooge.** Be here all the earlier the next morning.

**Cratchit.** I will, sir.

180 **Scrooge.** Then off, off.

**Cratchit.** Yes, sir! Merry Christmas, sir!

**Scrooge.** Bah! (*As soon as Cratchit opens the door, the sounds of the street begin, very bright and loud. Cratchit is caught up in a swell of people hurrying through the street. Children pull him along to the top of an ice slide, and he runs and slides down it, disappearing in darkness as the stage suddenly is left almost empty. Scrooge goes around the room blowing out the candles, talking to himself.*) Christmas

190 Eve. Carolers! Bah! There. Another day. (*He opens his door and peers out.*) Black, very black.

Now where are they? (*The children are heard singing carols for a moment.*) Begging pennies for their songs, are they? Oh, boy! Here, boy! (*The little girl emerges from the shadows. Scrooge hands her a dark lantern, and she holds it while he lights it with an ember from the pile of coals.*)



5. **gruel:** a thin, watery food made by boiling ground grain in water or milk.

6. **half a crown:** until 1971, an amount of British money equal to one-eighth of a pound. The pound is the basic unit of British money.



## SCENE 2

### ~ SCROOGE GOES HOME ~

**Scrooge** (*talking to the little girl*). Hold it quiet! There. Off now. That's it. High. Black as pitch. Light the street, that's it. You're a bright lad! Good to see that. Earn your supper, boy. You'll not go hungry this night. Home. You know the way, do you? Yes, that's the way. The house of Ebenezer Scrooge. (*As the two find their way to Scrooge's house, the audience sees and hears a brief image of a cathedral interior with a living crèche<sup>7</sup> and a large choir singing "Amen!"*; the image ends in a blackout. The lights come up immediately, and Scrooge is at his door.) Hold the light up, boy, up. (*The girl with the lantern disappears.*) Where did he go? Boy? No matter. There's a penny saved. Lantern's gone out. No matter. A candle saved. Yes, here's the key. (*He turns with the key toward the door, and Marley's face swims out of the darkness. Scrooge watches, unable to speak. He fumbles for a match,* lights the lantern, and swings it toward the figure, which melts away. Pause. Scrooge fits the key in the lock and turns it as the door suddenly is opened from the inside by the porter, Sparsit. Scrooge is startled, then recovers.) Sparsit?

**Sparsit.** Yes, sir?

**Scrooge.** Hurry, hurry. The door . . . close it.

**Sparsit.** Did you knock, sir?

**Scrooge.** Knock? What matter? Here, light me up the stairs.

**Sparsit.** Yes, sir. (*He leads Scrooge up the stairs. They pass the cook on the way. Scrooge brushes by her, stops, looks back, and she leans toward him.*)

**Cook.** Something to warm you, sir? Porridge?

**Scrooge.** Wha . . . ? No. No, nothing.

**Cook** (*waiting for her Christmas coin*). Merry Christmas, sir. (*Scrooge ignores the request and the cook disappears. Mumbling, Scrooge follows Sparsit.*)

**Scrooge** (*looking back after the cook is gone*). Fright a man nearly out of his life . . . Merry Christmas . . . bah!

**Sparsit.** Your room, sir.

**Scrooge.** Hmmm? Oh, yes, yes. And good night.

**Sparsit** (*extending his hand for his coin*). Merry Christmas, sir.

**Scrooge.** Yes, yes . . . (*He sees the outstretched hand; he knows what Sparsit wants and is infuriated.*) Out! Out! (*He closes the door after Sparsit, turns toward his chamber, and discovers the charwoman directly behind him.*)

**Charwoman.** Warm your bed for you, sir?

**Scrooge.** What? Out! Out!

**Charwoman.** Aye, sir. (*She starts for the door. Marley's voice is heard mumbling something unintelligible.*)

**Scrooge.** What's that?

**Charwoman.** Me, sir? Not a thing, sir.

**Scrooge.** Then, good night.

**Charwoman.** Good night. (*She exits, and Scrooge pantomimes shutting the door behind her. The voice of Marley over an offstage microphone whispers and reverberates:*<sup>8</sup> "Merry Christmas, Scrooge!" Silence. Scrooge hears the voice but cannot account for it. He climbs up to open a window and looks down. A cathedral choir singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful" is heard in the distance. Scrooge listens a moment, shuts the window,

7. a cathedral interior with a living crèche: the inside of a large church in which real people pose for the Christmas manger scene.

8. reverberates (rĭ-vûr'bə-rāts'): echoes.



and prepares for bed. As soon as he has shut the sound out of his room, figures appear; they seem  
70 to be coming down the main aisle of a church, bearing gifts to the living crèche. The orchestra plays “O Come, All Ye Faithful” as the procession files out. Scrooge, ready for bed, warms himself before the heap of coals. As he pulls his nightcap from a chair, a small hand-bell tumbles off onto the floor. Startled, he picks it up and rings it for reassurance; an echo answers it. He turns and sees the little girl on the street; she is swinging her doll, which produces the echo of his bell. Scrooge  
80 escapes to his bed; the girl is swallowed up in the darkness. The bell sounds grow to a din, **incoherent** as in a dream, then suddenly fall silent. Scrooge sits up in bed, listens, and hears the chains of Marley coming up the stairs. Scrooge reaches for the bell pull to summon Sparsit. The bell responds with a gong, and Marley appears. He and Scrooge face one another.)

**Scrooge.** What do you want with me?

**Marley** (*in a ghostly, unreal voice*). Much.

90 **Scrooge.** Who are you?

**Marley.** Ask who I was.

**Scrooge.** Who were you?

**Marley.** In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

**Scrooge.** He’s dead.

**Marley.** Seven years this night, Ebenezer Scrooge.

**Scrooge.** Why do you come here?

**Marley.** I must. It is commanded me. I must wander the world and see what I can no longer share, what I would not share when I walked  
100 where you do.

**Scrooge.** And must go thus?

**Marley.** The chain? Look at it, Ebenezer, study it. Locks and vaults and golden coins. I forged it, each link, each day when I sat in these chairs,

commanded these rooms. Greed, Ebenezer Scrooge, wealth. Feel them, know them. Yours was as heavy as this I wear seven years ago, and you have labored to build it since.

**Scrooge.** If you’re here to lecture, I have  
110 no time for it. It is late; the night is cold. I want comfort now.

**Marley.** I have none to give. I know not how you see me this night. I did not ask it. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. I am commanded to bring you a chance, Ebenezer. Heed it!

**Scrooge.** Quickly then, quickly.

**Marley.** You will be haunted by three spirits.

**Scrooge** (*scoffing*). Is that the chance?

120 **Marley.** Mark it.

**Scrooge.** I do not choose to.

**Marley** (*ominously*). Then you will walk where I do, burdened by your riches, your greed.

**Scrooge.** Spirits mean nothing to me.

**Marley** (*slowly leaving*). Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one, the second on the next night at the same hour, the third upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ended. Look to see me no more.

130 I must wander. Look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us.

**Scrooge.** Jacob . . . Don’t leave me! . . . Jacob! Jacob!

**Marley.** Adieu,<sup>9</sup> Ebenezer. (*At Marley’s last words a funeral procession begins to move across the stage. A boy walks in front; a priest follows, swinging a censer;<sup>10</sup> sounds of mourning and the suggestion of church music are heard. Scrooge calls out, “Jacob, don’t leave me!” as if talking in the midst  
140 of a bad dream. At the end of the procession is the little girl, swinging her doll and singing softly.*)

9. **adieu** (ə-dyoo): farewell.

10. **censer**: a container in which incense is burned.



**Girl.**

Hushabye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleep, little baby.  
When you wake, you shall have  
All the pretty little horses,  
Blacks and bays, dapples and grays,  
All the pretty little horses.

*(She stops singing and looks up at Scrooge; their eyes meet, and she solemnly rings the bell in greeting. Scrooge pulls shut the bed curtains, and the girl exits. The bell sounds are picked up by the bells of a leper<sup>11</sup> who enters, dragging himself along.)*

**Leper** *(calling out)*. Leper! Leper! Stay the way!  
Leper! Leper! Keep away! *(He exits and the clock*

*begins to chime, ringing the hours. Scrooge sits up in bed and begins to count the chimes.)*

**Scrooge.** Eight . . . nine . . . ten . . . eleven . . . it can't be . . . twelve. Midnight? No. Not twelve.  
<sup>160</sup> It can't be. I haven't slept the whole day through. Twelve? Yes, yes, twelve noon. *(He hurries to the window and looks out.)* Black. Twelve midnight. *(pause)* I must get up. A day wasted. I must get down to the office. *(Two small chimes are heard.)* Quarter past. But it just rang twelve. Fifteen minutes haven't gone past, not so quickly. *(Again two small chimes are heard.)* A quarter to one. The spirit . . . It's to come at one. *(He hurries to his bed as the chimes ring again.)* One.

11. **leper**: a person who has leprosy, a skin disease once thought to be highly contagious.

# SCENE 3

## ~ THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PAST ~

*The hour is struck again by a large street clock, and the first spirit appears. It is a figure dressed to look like the little girl's doll.*

**Scrooge.** Are you the spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

**First Spirit.** I am.

**Scrooge.** Who and what are you?

**First Spirit.** I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

**Scrooge.** Long past?

10 **First Spirit.** Your past.

**Scrooge.** Why are you here?

**First Spirit.** Your welfare. Rise. Walk with me.

**Scrooge.** I am mortal still. I cannot pass through air.

**First Spirit.** My hand. (*Scrooge grasps the spirit's hand tightly, and the doll's bell rings softly. Scrooge remembers a scene from his past in which two boys greet each other in the street.*)

**First Voice.** Halloo, Jack!

20 **Second Voice.** Ben! Merry Christmas, Ben!

**Scrooge.** Jack Walton. Young Jack Walton. Spirits . . . ?

**First Voice.** Have a good holiday, Jack.

**Scrooge.** Yes, yes, I remember him. Both of them. Little Ben Benjamin. He used to . . .

**First Voice.** See you next term, Jack. Next . . . term . . .

**Scrooge.** They . . . they're off for the holidays and going home from school. It's Christmas  
30 time . . . all of the children off home now . . .  
No . . . no, not all . . . there was one . . .

*(The spirit motions for Scrooge to turn, and he sees a young boy playing with a teddy bear and talking to it.)* Yes . . . reading . . . poor boy.

**First Spirit.** What, I wonder?

**Scrooge.** Reading? Oh, it was nothing. Fancy, all fancy and make-believe and take-me-away. All of it. Yes, nonsense.

**Child Scrooge.** Ali Baba.<sup>12</sup>

40 **Scrooge.** Yes . . . that was it . . .

**Child Scrooge.** Yes, and remember . . . and remember . . . remember Robinson Crusoe?<sup>13</sup>

**Scrooge.** And the parrot!

**Child Scrooge.** Yes, the parrot! I love him best.

**Scrooge** (*imitating the parrot*). With his stripy green body and yellow tail drooping along and couldn't sing—awk—but could talk, and a thing like a lettuce growing out the top of his head . . . and he used to sit on the very top of the tree—up there.

50 **Child Scrooge.** And Robinson Crusoe sailed around the island, and he thought he had escaped the island, and the parrot said, the parrot said . . .

**Scrooge** (*imitating the parrot*). Robinson Crusoe, where you been? Awk! Robinson Crusoe, where you been?

**Child Scrooge.** And Robinson Crusoe looked up in the tree and saw the parrot and knew he hadn't escaped and he was still there, still all alone there.

60 **Scrooge.** Poor Robinson Crusoe.

**Child Scrooge** (*sadly replacing the teddy bear*). Poor Robinson Crusoe.

**Scrooge.** Poor child. Poor child.

**First Spirit.** Why poor?

**Scrooge.** Fancy . . . fancy . . . (*He tries to mask his feelings by being brusque.*) It's his way, a child's

12. **Ali Baba:** in the *Arabian Nights*, a poor woodcutter who discovers a treasure.

13. **Robinson Crusoe:** a shipwrecked sailor who survives for years on a small island in the novel *Robinson Crusoe*.



way to . . . to lose being alone in . . . in dreams, dreams . . . Never matter if they are all nonsense, yes, nonsense. But he'll be all right, grow out  
70 of it. Yes. Yes, he did outgrow it, the nonsense. Became a man and left there, and he became, yes, he became a man and . . . yes, successful . . . rich! (*The sadness returns.*) Never matter . . . never matter. (Fan *runs in and goes to* Child Scrooge.) Fan!

**Fan.** Brother, dear brother! (*She kisses* Child Scrooge.)

**Child Scrooge.** Dear, dear Fan.

**Fan.** I've come to bring you home, home for good and ever. Come with me, come now. (*She takes his hand, and they start to run off, but*  
80 *the spirit stops them and signals for the light on them to fade. They look at the spirit, aware of their role in the spirit's "education" of Scrooge.*)

**Scrooge.** Let me watch them go? Let them be happy for a moment! (*The spirit says nothing. Scrooge turns away from them, and the light goes out.*) A delicate, delicate child. A breath might have withered her.

**First Spirit.** She died a woman and had, as I remember, children.

**Scrooge.** One child.

90 **First Spirit.** Your nephew.

**Scrooge.** Yes, yes, Fred, my nephew. (*Scrooge pauses, then tries to bluster through.*) Well? Well, all of us have that, haven't we? Childhoods? Sadnesses? But we grow and we become men, masters of ourselves. (*The spirit gestures for music to begin. It is heard first as from a great distance, then Scrooge becomes aware of it.*) I've no time for it, Spirit. Music and all of your Christmas folderol.<sup>14</sup> Yes, yes, I've learnt what you have  
100 to show me. (*Fezziwig, Young Ebenezer, and Dick appear, busily preparing for a party.*)

**Fezziwig.** Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!

**Scrooge.** Fezziwig! It's old Fezziwig that I 'prenticed<sup>15</sup> under.

**First Spirit.** Your master?

**Scrooge.** Oh, aye, and the best that any boy could have. There's Dick Wilkins! Bless me. He was very much attached to me was Dick. Poor Dick. Dear, dear.

110 **Fezziwig.** Yo ho, my boys! No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick! Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up before a man can say Jack Robinson! (*The music continues. Chandeliers are pulled into position, and mistletoe, holly, and ivy are draped over everything by bustling servants. Dancers fill the stage for Fezziwig's wonderful Christmas party. In the midst of the dancing and the gaiety servants pass back and forth through the crowd*  
120 *with huge platters of food. At a pause in the music, Young Ebenezer, who is dancing, calls out.*)

**Young Ebenezer.** Mr. Fezziwig, sir, you're a wonderful master!

**Scrooge and Young Ebenezer.** A wonderful master!

**Scrooge** (*echoing the phrase*). A wonderful master! (*The music changes suddenly, and the dancers jerk into distorted postures and then begin to move in slow motion. The celebrants slowly exit, performing a macabre*  
130 *dance to discordant sounds.*<sup>16</sup>)

**First Spirit.** Just because he gave a party? It was very small.

**Scrooge.** Small!

**First Spirit.** He spent a few pounds of your "mortal" money, three, four at the most. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

**Scrooge.** But it wasn't the money. He had the power to make us happy, to make our service light or burdensome. The happiness he gives

14. **folderol** (fŏl'-dä-rŏl'): foolishness; nonsense.

15. **'prenticed**: short for *apprenticed*, here meaning "learned a trade while working."

16. **macabre** (mə-kä'brə) **dance to discordant sounds**: a bizarre, ghastly dance with unharmonious music.

140 is quite as great as if it cost a fortune. That's what . . . a good master is.

**First Spirit.** Yes?

**Scrooge.** No, no, nothing.

**First Spirit.** Something, I think.

**Scrooge.** I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now, that's all.

**First Spirit.** But this is all past. Your clerk, Cratchit, couldn't be here.

**Scrooge.** No, no, of course not, an idle thought.

150 Are we done?

**First Spirit** (*motioning for the waltz music to begin*). Nearly.

**Scrooge** (*hearing the waltz and remembering it*). Surely it's enough. Haven't you tormented me enough? (Young Ebenezer *is seen waltzing with his Sweetheart*.)

**First Spirit.** I only show the past, what it promised you. Look. Another promise.

**Scrooge.** Oh. Oh, yes. I had forgotten . . . her. Don't they dance beautifully? So young, so

160 young. I would have married her if only . . .

**Sweetheart.** Can you love me, Ebenezer? I bring no dowry<sup>17</sup> to my marriage, only me, only love. It is no **currency** that you can buy and sell with, but we can live with it. Can you? (*She pauses, then returns the ring Scrooge gave her as his pledge.*) I release you, Ebenezer, for the love of the man you once were. Will that man win me again, now that he is free?

**Scrooge** (*trying to speak to her*). If only you had  
170 held me to it. You should not have let me go. I was young; I did love you.

**Sweetheart** (*speaking to Young Ebenezer*). We have never lied to one another. May you be happy in the life you have chosen. Good-bye. (*She runs out. Young Ebenezer slowly leaves.*)

**Scrooge.** No, no, it was not meant that way . . . !

**First Spirit.** You cannot change now what you would not change then. I am your mistakes, Ebenezer Scrooge, all of the things you could  
180 have done and did not.

**Scrooge.** Then leave me! I have done them. I shall live with them. As I have, as I do; as I will.

**First Spirit.** There is another Christmas, seven years ago, when Marley died.

**Scrooge.** No! I will not see it. I will not! He died. I could not prevent it. I did not choose for him to die on Christmas Day.

**First Spirit.** And when his day was chosen, what did you do then?

190 **Scrooge.** I looked after his affairs.

**First Spirit.** His business.

**Scrooge.** Yes! His business! Mine! It was all that I had, all that I could do in this world. I have nothing to do with the world to come after.

**First Spirit.** Then I will leave you.

**Scrooge.** Not yet! Don't leave me here! Tell me what I must do! What of the other spirits?

**First Spirit.** They will come.

**Scrooge.** And you? What of you?

200 **First Spirit.** I am always with you. (*The little girl appears with her doll; she takes Scrooge's hand and gently leads him to bed. Numbed, he follows her. She leans against the foot of the bed, ringing the doll and singing. The first spirit exits as she sings.*)

**Girl.**

When you wake, you shall have  
All the pretty little horses,  
Blacks and bays, dapples and grays,  
All the pretty little horses.

210 (*She rings the doll, and the ringing becomes the chiming of Scrooge's bell. The girl exits. Scrooge sits upright in bed as he hears the chimes.*)

**Scrooge.** A minute until one. No one here. No one's coming. (*A larger clock strikes one o'clock.*)

17. **dowry** (dou'rê): money or property brought by a bride to her husband when they marry.



# SCENE 4

## ~ THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT ~

*A light comes on. Scrooge becomes aware of it and goes slowly to it. He sees the second spirit, the Spirit of Christmas Present, who looks like Fezziwig.*

**Scrooge.** Fezziwig!

**Second Spirit.** Hello, Scrooge.

**Scrooge.** But you can't be . . . not Fezziwig.

**Second Spirit.** Do you see me as him?

**Scrooge.** I do.

10 **Second Spirit.** And hear me as him?

**Scrooge.** I do.

**Second Spirit.** I wish I were the gentleman, so as not to disappoint you.

**Scrooge.** But you're not . . . ?

**Second Spirit.** No, Mr. Scrooge. You have never seen the like of me before. I am the Ghost of Christmas Present.

**Scrooge.** But . . .

20 **Second Spirit.** You see what you will see, Scrooge, no more. Will you walk out with me this Christmas Eve?

**Scrooge.** But I am not yet dressed.

**Second Spirit.** Take my tails, dear boy, we're leaving.

**Scrooge.** Wait!

**Second Spirit.** What is it now?

**Scrooge.** Christmas Present, did you say?

**Second Spirit.** I did.

30 **Scrooge.** Then we are traveling here? In this town? London? Just down there?

**Second Spirit.** Yes, yes, of course.

**Scrooge.** Then we could walk? Your flying is . . . well, too sudden for an old man. Well?

**Second Spirit.** It's your Christmas, Scrooge; I am only the guide.

**Scrooge** (*puzzled*). Then we can walk? (*The spirit nods.*) Where are you guiding me to?

**Second Spirit.** Bob Cratchit's.

**Scrooge.** My clerk?

40 **Second Spirit.** You did want to talk to him? (*Scrooge pauses, uncertain how to answer.*) Don't worry, Scrooge, you won't have to.

**Scrooge** (*trying to change the subject, to cover his error*). Shouldn't be much of a trip. With fifteen bob<sup>18</sup> a week, how far off can it be?

**Second Spirit.** A world away, Scrooge, at least that far. (*Scrooge and the spirit start to step off a curb when a funeral procession enters with a child's coffin, followed by the poorhouse children, who are singing. Seated on top of the coffin is the little girl. She and Scrooge look at one another.*) That is the way to it, Scrooge. (*The procession follows the coffin offstage; Scrooge and the spirit exit after the procession. As they leave, the lights focus on Mrs. Cratchit and her children. Mrs. Cratchit sings as she puts Tiny Tim and the other children to bed, all in one bed. She pulls a dark blanket over them.*)

**Mrs. Cratchit** (*singing*).

60 When you wake, you shall have  
All the pretty little horses,  
Blacks and bays, dapples and grays,  
All the pretty little horses.  
To sleep now, all of you. Christmas tomorrow.  
(*She kisses them and goes to Bob Cratchit, who is by the hearth.*) How did our little Tiny Tim behave?

**Bob Cratchit.** As good as gold and better. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the

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18. **bob:** a British slang term for shillings. (There were 20 shillings in a pound.)





people saw him in church because he was  
70 a cripple and it might be pleasant to them  
to remember upon Christmas Day who made  
the lame to walk and the blind to see.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** He's a good boy. (*The second spirit and Scrooge enter. Mrs. Cratchit feels a sudden draft.*) Oh, the wind. (*She gets up to shut the door.*)

**Second Spirit.** Hurry. (*He nudges Scrooge in before Mrs. Cratchit shuts the door.*)

**Scrooge.** Hardly hospitable is what I'd say.

**Second Spirit.** Oh, they'd say a great deal more,  
80 Scrooge, if they could see you.

**Scrooge.** Oh, they should, should they?

**Second Spirit.** Oh yes, I'd think they might.

**Scrooge.** Well, I might have a word for  
them . . .

**Second Spirit.** You're here to listen.

**Scrooge.** Oh. Oh yes, all right. By the fire?

**Second Spirit.** But not a word.

**Bob Cratchit** (*raising his glass*). My dear,  
to Mr. Scrooge. I give you Mr. Scrooge, the  
90 founder of the feast.

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

**Bob Cratchit.** My dear, Christmas Eve.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** It should be Christmas Eve,  
I'm sure, when one drinks the health of such  
an odious,<sup>19</sup> stingy, hard, unfeeling man as  
Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody  
100 knows it better than you do, poor dear.

**Bob Cratchit.** I only know one thing on  
Christmas: that one must be charitable.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** I'll drink to his health for your  
sake and the day's, not for his. Long life to  
him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New

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19. **odious** (ō'dē-əs): causing or deserving strong dislike.

Year. He'll be very merry and very happy,  
I have no doubt.

**Bob Cratchit.** If he cannot be, we must be happy  
for him. A song is what is needed. Tim!

110 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Shush! I've just gotten him down,  
and he needs all the sleep he can get.

**Bob Cratchit.** If he's asleep on Christmas Eve,  
I'll be much mistaken. Tim! He must sing, dear;  
there is nothing else that might make him well.

**Tiny Tim.** Yes, Father?

**Bob Cratchit.** Are you awake?

**Tiny Tim.** Just a little.

**Bob Cratchit.** A song then! (*The children awaken  
and, led by Tiny Tim, sit up to sing "What Child  
120 Is This?" As they sing, Scrooge speaks.*)

**Scrooge.** (*He holds up his hand; all stop sing-  
ing and look at him.*) I . . . I have seen enough.  
(*When the spirit signals to the children, they  
leave the stage, singing the carol quietly. Tiny  
Tim remains, covered completely by the dark  
blanket, disappearing against the black.*) Tiny  
Tim . . . will he live?

**Second Spirit.** He is very ill. Even song cannot  
keep him whole through a cold winter.

130 **Scrooge.** But you haven't told me!

**Second Spirit** (*imitating Scrooge*). If he be like to  
die, he had better do it and decrease the surplus  
population. (*Scrooge turns away.*) Erase, Scrooge,  
those words from your thoughts. You are not the  
judge. Do not judge, then. It may be that in the  
sight of heaven you are more worthless and less  
fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.  
Oh God! To hear an insect on a leaf pronouncing  
that there is too much life among his hungry  
140 brothers in the dust. Good-bye, Scrooge.

**Scrooge.** But is there no happiness in  
Christmas Present?

**Second Spirit.** There is.

**Scrooge.** Take me there.

**Second Spirit.** It is at the home of your  
nephew . . .

**Scrooge.** No!

**Second Spirit** (*disgusted with Scrooge*). Then  
there is none.

150 **Scrooge.** But that isn't enough . . . You must  
teach me!

**Second Spirit.** Would you have a teacher,  
Scrooge? Look at your own words.

**Scrooge.** But the first spirit gave me more . . . !

**Second Spirit.** He was Christmas Past. There  
was a lifetime he could choose from. I have  
only this day, one day, and you, Scrooge. I have  
nearly lived my fill of both. Christmas Present  
must be gone at midnight. That is near now.  
160 (*He speaks to two beggar children who pause  
shyly at the far side of the stage. The children are  
thin and wan; they are barefoot and wear filthy  
rags.*) Come. (*They go to him.*)

**Scrooge.** Is this the last spirit who is to come  
to me?

**Second Spirit.** They are no spirits. They are  
real. Hunger, Ignorance. Not spirits, Scrooge,  
passing dreams. They are real. They walk your  
streets, look to you for comfort. And you  
170 deny them. Deny them not too long, Scrooge.  
They will grow and multiply, and they will not  
remain children.

**Scrooge.** Have they no refuge, no resource?

**Second Spirit** (*again imitating Scrooge*). Are  
there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?  
(*tenderly to the children*) Come. It's Christmas  
180 Eve. (*He leads them offstage.*)

# SCENE 5

## ~ THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME ~

Scrooge is entirely alone for a long moment. He is frightened by the darkness and feels it approaching him. Suddenly he stops, senses the presence of the third spirit, turns toward him, and sees him. The spirit is bent and cloaked. No physical features are distinguishable.

**Scrooge.** You are the third. (*The spirit says nothing.*) The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. (*The spirit says nothing.*) Speak to me. Tell me what is to happen—to me, to all of us. (*The spirit says nothing.*) Then show me what I must see. (*The spirit points. Light illumines the shadowy recesses of Scrooge's house.*) I know it. I know it too well, cold and cheerless. It is mine. (*The cook and the charwoman are dimly visible in Scrooge's house.*) What is . . . ? There are . . . thieves! There are thieves in my rooms! (*He starts forward to accost them, but the spirit beckons for him to stop.*) I cannot. You cannot tell me that I must watch them and do nothing. I will not. It is mine still. (*He rushes into the house to claim his belongings and to protect them. The two women do not notice his presence.*)

**Cook.** He ain't about, is he? (*The charwoman laughs.*) Poor ol' Scrooge 'as met 'is end.<sup>20</sup> (*She laughs with the charwoman.*)

**Charwoman.** An' time for it, too; ain't been alive in deed for half his life.

**Cook.** But the Sparsit's nowhere, is he . . . ?

**Sparsit** (*emerging from the blackness*). Lookin' for someone, ladies? (*The cook shrieks, but the charwoman treats the matter more practically, anticipating competition from Sparsit.*)

**Charwoman.** There ain't enough but for the two of us!

**Sparsit.** More 'an enough . . . if you know where to look.

**Cook.** Hardly decent is what I'd say, hardly decent, the poor old fella hardly cold and you're thievin' his wardrobe.

**Sparsit.** You're here out of love, are ya?

**Charwoman.** There's no time for that. (*Sparsit acknowledges Scrooge for the first time, gesturing toward him as if the living Scrooge were the corpse. Scrooge stands as if rooted to the spot, held there by the power of the spirit.*)

**Sparsit.** He ain't about to bother us, is he?

**Charwoman.** Ain't he a picture?

**Cook.** If he is, it ain't a happy one. (*They laugh.*)

**Sparsit.** Ladies, shall we start? (*The three of them grin and advance on Scrooge.*) Cook?

**Cook** (*snatching the cuff links from the shirt Scrooge wears*). They're gold, ain't they?

**Sparsit.** The purest, madam.

**Charwoman.** I always had a fancy for that nightcap of his. My old man could use it. (*She takes the nightcap from Scrooge's head. Sparsit playfully removes Scrooge's outer garment, the coat or cloak that he has worn in the previous scenes.*)

**Sparsit.** Bein' a man of more practical tastes, I'll go for the worsted<sup>21</sup> and hope the smell ain't permanent. (*The three laugh.*) Cook, we go round again.

**Cook.** Do you think that little bell he's always ringing at me is silver enough to sell? (*The three of them move toward the nightstand, and Scrooge cries out.*)

20. 'as met 'is end: a dialect pronunciation of "has met his end."

21. worsted: a smooth woolen fabric.





**Scrooge.** No more! No more! (*As the spirit*  
70 *directs Scrooge's attention to the tableau*<sup>22</sup>  
*of the three thieves standing poised over the silver*  
*bell, Scrooge bursts out of the house, clad only*  
*in his nightshirt.*) I cannot. I cannot. The room  
is . . . too like a cheerless place that is familiar.  
I won't see it. Let us go from here. Anywhere.  
(*The spirit directs his attention to the Cratchit*  
*house; the children are sitting together near*  
*Mrs. Cratchit, who is sewing a coat. Peter reads*  
*by the light of the coals.*)

80 **Peter.** "And he took a child and set him in the  
midst of them."

**Mrs. Cratchit** (*putting her hand to her face*).  
The light tires my eyes so. (*pause*) They're  
better now. It makes them tired to try to see  
by firelight, and I wouldn't show reddened

eyes to your father when he comes home  
for the world. It must be near his time now.

**Peter.** Past it, I think, but he walks slower  
than he used to, these last few days, Mother.

90 **Mrs. Cratchit.** I have known him to walk  
with . . . I have known him to walk with  
Tiny Tim upon his shoulder very fast indeed.  
(*She catches herself, then hurries on.*) But he  
was very light to carry and his father loved  
him, so that it was no trouble, no trouble.  
(*She hears Bob Cratchit approaching.*)  
Smiles, everyone, smiles.

**Bob Cratchit** (*entering*). My dear, Peter . . .  
(*He greets the other children by their real*  
100 *names.*) How is it coming?

**Mrs. Cratchit** (*handing him the coat*).  
Nearly done.

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22. **tableau** (täb'lō'): a portion of a play where the actors momentarily freeze in their positions for dramatic effect.



**Bob Cratchit.** Yes, good, I'm sure that it will be done long before Sunday.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** Sunday! You went today then, Robert?

**Bob Cratchit.** Yes. It's . . . it's all ready. Two o'clock. And a nice place. It would have done you good to see how green it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that, that I would  
110 walk there on Sunday . . . often.

**Mrs. Cratchit.** We mustn't hurt ourselves for it, Robert.

**Bob Cratchit.** No. No, he wouldn't have wanted that. Come now. You won't guess who I've seen. Scrooge's nephew, Fred. And he asked after us and said he was heartily sorry and to give his respect to my good wife. How he ever knew that, I don't know.

120 **Mrs. Cratchit.** Knew what, my dear?

**Bob Cratchit.** Why, that you were a good wife.

**Peter.** Everybody knows that.

**Bob Cratchit.** I hope that they do. "Heartily sorry," he said, "for your good wife, and if I can be of service to you in any way—" and he gave me his card—"that's where I live"—and Peter, I shouldn't be at all surprised if he got you a position.

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

130 **Bob Cratchit.** And then you'll be keeping company with some young girl and setting up for yourself.

**Peter.** Oh, go on.

**Bob Cratchit.** Well, it will happen, one day, but remember, when that day does come—as it must—we must none of us forget poor Tiny Tim and this first parting in our family.

**Scrooge.** He died! No, no! (*He steps back and the scene disappears; he moves away from the spirit.*)



# SCENE 6

## ~ SCROOGE'S CONVERSION ~

**Scrooge.** Because he would not . . . no! You cannot tell me that he has died, for that Christmas has not come! I will not let it come! I will be there . . . It was me. Yes, yes, and I knew it and couldn't look. I won't be able to help. I won't. (*pause*) Spirit, hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be that man that I have been for so many years. Why show me all of this if I am past all hope? Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me. Let the boy live! I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I am not too late! (*A single light focuses on the little girl, dressed in a blue cloak like that of the Virgin Mary. She looks up, and from above a dove is slowly lowered in silence to her; she takes it and encloses it within her cloak, covering it. As soon as she does this, a large choir is heard singing "Gloria!" and the bells begin to ring. Blackout. When the lights come up again, Scrooge is in bed. The third spirit and the figures in the church have disappeared. Scrooge awakens and looks around his room.*) The curtains! They are mine and they are real. They are not sold. They are here. I am here; the shadows to come may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will be. (*He dresses himself hurriedly.*) I don't know what to do. I'm as light as a feather, merry as a boy again. Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! A Happy New Year to all the world! Hello there! Whoop! Hallo! What day of the month is it? How long did the spirits keep me? Never mind. I don't care. (*He opens the window and calls to a boy in the street below.*) What's today?

**Boy.** Eh?

**Scrooge.** What's the day, my fine fellow?

**Boy.** Today? Why, Christmas Day!

**Scrooge.** It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can save Tim. Hallo, my fine fellow!

**Boy.** Hallo!

**Scrooge.** Do you know the poulterers<sup>23</sup> in the next street at the corner?

**Boy.** I should hope I do.

**Scrooge.** An intelligent boy. A remarkable boy. Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there? Not the little prize; the big one.

**Boy.** What, the one as big as me?

**Scrooge.** What a delightful boy! Yes, my bucko!

**Boy.** It's hanging there now.

**Scrooge.** It is? Go and buy it.

**Boy.** G'wan!

**Scrooge.** I'm in earnest! Go and buy it and tell 'em to bring it here that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the butcher and I'll give you a shilling. Come back in less than two minutes and I'll give you half a crown!

**Boy.** Right, guv! (*He exits.*)

**Scrooge.** I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim and such a Christmas dinner it will make. (*Carolers suddenly appear singing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."*) Scrooge leans

23. **poulterers** (pōl'tər-ərz): people who sell poultry, such as chickens and turkeys.



70 *out the window and joins them in the song.*)  
I must dress, I must. It's Christmas Day! I must  
be all in my best for such a day. Where is my  
China silk shirt? (*The boy and the butcher run  
in with the turkey.*) What? Back already? And  
such a turkey. Why, you can't carry that all the  
way to Cratchit's. Here, boy, here is your half  
a crown and here an address in Camden Town.  
See that it gets there. Here, money for the cab,  
for the turkey, and for you, good man! (*The  
80 boy and the butcher, delighted, catch the money  
and run out. Scrooge sees the gentleman visitor  
walking by the window.*) Halloo, sir!

**Gentleman Visitor** (*looking up sadly, less than  
festive*). Hello, sir.

**Scrooge**. My dear sir, how do you do? I hope  
you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of  
you to stop by to see me.

**Gentleman Visitor** (*in disbelief*). Mr. Scrooge?

**Scrooge**. Yes, that is my name, and I fear it may  
90 not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your  
pardon, and will you have the goodness to add  
this (*throwing him a purse*) to your good work!

**Gentleman Visitor**. Lord bless me! My dear  
Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?

**Scrooge**. If you please, not a penny less. A great  
many back payments are included in it, I assure  
you. Will you do me that favor?

**Gentleman Visitor**. My dear sir, I don't know  
what I can say to such generosity . . .

100 **Scrooge**. Say nothing! Accept it. Come and see  
me. Will you come and see me?

**Gentleman Visitor**. I will.

**Scrooge**. Thank 'ee. I am much obliged to you.  
I thank you fifty times. God bless you and  
Merry Christmas!

**Gentleman Visitor**. Merry Christmas to  
you, sir!

**Scrooge** (*running downstairs, out of his house,  
and onto the street*). Now which is the way  
110 to that nephew's house. Girl! Girl!

**Girl** (*appearing immediately*). Yes, sir?

**Scrooge**. Can you find me a taxi, miss?

**Girl**. I can, sir. (*She rings her doll, and a  
coachman appears.*)

**Scrooge** (*handing the coachman a card*).  
Can you show me the way to this home?

**Coachman**. I can, sir.

**Scrooge**. Good man. Come up, girl. (*They  
mount to the top of the taxi. This action may  
120 be stylistically suggested.*) Would you be  
an old man's guide to a Christmas dinner?

**Girl**. I would, sir, and God bless you!

**Scrooge**. Yes, God bless us every one! (*raising  
his voice almost in song*) Driver, to Christmas!  
(*They exit, all three singing "Joy to the World."  
Blackout. The lights come up for the finale<sup>24</sup>  
at Fred's house. The Cratchits are there with  
Tiny Tim. All stop moving and talking when  
they see Scrooge standing in the center,*

130 *embarrassed and humble.*) Well, I'm very glad  
to be here at my nephew's house! (*He starts  
to cry.*) Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

**All** (*softly*). Merry Christmas. (*They sing "Deck  
the Halls," greeting one another and exchanging  
gifts. Scrooge puts Tiny Tim on his shoulders.*)

**Tiny Tim** (*shouting as the carol ends*). God bless  
us every one!

**Scrooge** (*to the audience*). Oh, yes! God bless  
us every one!

24. **finale** (fə-nāl'ē): conclusion.

**ONLINE ARTICLE** In the play *A Christmas Carol*, you read about a man named Scrooge, who was stingy with his money. In the following article, you'll read about why Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* and how some real-life Scrooges took advantage of Dickens.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a blue header and a purple navigation bar. The main content area is white with a purple sidebar on the left. The browser's address bar shows the URL: [http://www.dickens.org/works/behind-a-christmas-carol/](#). The page title is "Dickens and Too Many Scrooges". The navigation bar includes links for "DICKENS BIOGRAPHY", "BOOKS BY DICKENS", and "THE STORY BEHIND A CHRISTMAS CAROL". The sidebar contains buttons for "Story Line", "Biography", "About Us", and "Links". The main text area features a large image of Scrooge and Bob Cratchit, with a caption: "Scrooge at his office with Bob Cratchit". The article text begins with a paragraph about Dickens' financial struggles and the origin of the story, followed by a paragraph about the book's production and a paragraph about its publication and piracy.

# Dickens and Too Many Scrooges

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**Scrooge at his office with Bob Cratchit**

Dickens' cherished little Christmas story, the best loved and most read of all of his books, began life as the result of the author's desperate need of money. In the fall of 1843 Dickens and his wife, Kate, were expecting their fifth child. Requests for money from his family, a large mortgage on his Devonshire Terrace home, and lagging sales from the monthly installments of *Martin Chuzzlewit* had left Dickens seriously short of cash.

As the idea for the story took shape and the writing began in earnest, Dickens became engrossed in the book. He wrote that as the tale unfolded he "wept and laughed, and wept again" and that he "walked about the black streets of London fifteen or twenty miles many a night when all sober folks had gone to bed."

At odds with his publishers, Dickens paid for the production costs of the book himself and insisted on a lavish design that included a gold-stamped cover and four hand-colored etchings. He also set the price at 5 shillings so that the book would be affordable to nearly everyone.

The book was published during the week before Christmas 1843 and was an instant sensation but, due to the high production costs, Dickens' earnings from the sales were lower than expected. In addition to the disappointing profit from the book, Dickens was enraged that the work was instantly the victim of pirated editions. Copyright laws in England were often loosely enforced, and a complete lack of international copyright law had been Dickens' theme during his trip to America the year before. He ended up spending more money fighting pirated editions of the book than he was making from the book itself.

Despite these early financial difficulties, Dickens' Christmas tale of human redemption has endured beyond even Dickens' own vivid imagination. It was a favorite during Dickens' public readings of his works late in his lifetime and is known today primarily due to the dozens of film versions and dramatizations which continue to be produced every year.

## Comprehension

- Recall** Who was Jacob Marley, and why does his spirit visit Scrooge?
- Recall** What does Scrooge do for the Cratchit family at the play's end?
- Clarify** How does Scrooge's view of money change from the beginning of the play to the end?

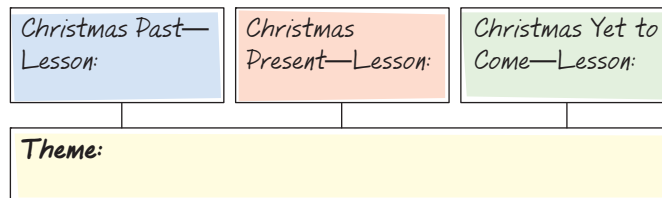
**COMMON CORE**

**RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.  
**RL 3** Analyze how particular elements of a drama interact.  
**RL 5** Analyze how a drama's form contributes to its meaning.

## Text Analysis

- Understand Sequence in Plot** Review the sequence wheel you created as you read. Number the sections according to the order in which the time periods are presented in the play. Use your numbers to summarize the **sequence** of events in *A Christmas Carol*.
- Make Inferences About Dialogue** What does the Spirit of Christmas Past mean by saying, "I am always with you"? Explain your answer.
- Draw Conclusions** Why do you think Tiny Tim's death affects Scrooge so deeply?
- Interpret Symbols** In the play there are a number of things used as symbols, such as Marley's chains, the little girl with the doll, and a dove. Reread lines 102–108 in Scene 2, lines 200–212 in Scene 3, and lines 18–22 in Scene 6. Choose one symbol and interpret its meaning.

- Analyze Theme** Use a diagram like the one shown to describe the lesson each spirit teaches Scrooge. Based on these lessons, what do you think the **theme** of the play is?



## Extension and Challenge

- Creative Project: Drama** With a small group, choose the scene or part of a scene that you feel best reflects Dickens's message. Act out the scene for the rest of the class. Then explain why your group chose it.
- SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** What was it like to live in Victorian England (1837–1901)? Find out by researching one element of the time period: the Poor Law of 1834, workhouses, prisons, leprosy, how wealthy people lived, or how poor people lived. Present your research to the class.



### How important is MONEY?

Do you think people can be happy without a lot of money?

## Language

### ◆ GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: Use Complex Sentences

When you use different types of sentence structures, you make ideas clearer and add variety to your writing. One type of sentence structure is a complex sentence. A **complex sentence** consists of one **independent clause**, also known as a main clause, and one or more subordinate clauses. **Subordinate clauses** begin with subordinate conjunctions, such as *because, since, after, although, even though, however, when, and while*. Here is an example of a complex sentence with the independent clause highlighted in yellow and the subordinate clause highlighted in green. The subordinate conjunction is underlined.

We can help people in need, although we don't have much money.

**PRACTICE** Rewrite the following paragraph. Use subordinating conjunctions to create at least two complex sentences. Then underline the independent clause and circle the subordinate clause in each sentence.

I still like money. Reading the play has changed my mind a little.  
Money can be important. Helping people is even more important.  
Scrooge found this out. It took him a long time.

For more help with independent and subordinate clauses, see pages R63–R64 in the *Grammar Handbook*.

### READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Demonstrate your understanding of *A Christmas Carol* by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tip** to improve your writing.

#### WRITING PROMPT

##### Extended Constructed Response: Statement

In lines 12–13 of Scene 6, Scrooge declares, “I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future.” In a **two- or three-paragraph response**, explain what Scrooge means by this statement. Also describe what steps he takes to accomplish his goal.

#### REVISING TIP

Review your essay. Make sure you use a variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences.



**L1b** Choose complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas. **W2** Write explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas.

