

Audio file

[119063-AChristmasCarolPlay.mp3](#)

Transcript

Speaker 1

Cratchit.

Speaker 2

Yes, sir.

Speaker 1

Correspondence, the matter of Unwin, Chatterham and Penge. You'll just make the last post.

Speaker 2

Begging your pardon, sir, but you're forgetting.

Speaker 3

I am.

Speaker 2

The last post's gone, sir. Early, on account of the season.

Speaker 3

Season.

Speaker 2

Christmas, sir.

Speaker 4

Humbag.

Speaker 1

As my esteemed partner would have it, Cratchit. Humbag.

Speaker 2

Yes, Mr. Marley. Humbug, sir. I'm sure, sir. Yes, sir.

Speaker 5

You'll deliver those letters by hand, Cratchit.

Speaker 2

All of them, Mrs. Gray.

Speaker 5

Every single one.

Speaker 2

But it's almost seven, sir. And Christmas Eve.

Speaker 5

Christmas Eve. And you'll want the whole day off tomorrow.

Speaker 2

It's quite convenient, sir.

Speaker 5

It's not convenient. And it's not fair. If we were to stop you half a crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used. I'll be bound.

Speaker 2

It is only once a year, sir.

Speaker 5

A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every 25th of December. Hey, Jacob.

Speaker 3

Well put, Ebenezer Christmas humbug.

Speaker 5

You'll dispatch every last one of those letters, Cratchit. And only then may you get yourself home for your celebrations.

Speaker 2

Yes, sir. Good night, Mr. Scrooge, Mr. Marley. A merry...

Speaker 5

A merry Christmas. And him a clerk on 15 shillings a week. We have only ourselves to blame, Jacob. Out of misguided altruism, we employ wretches such as Cratchit. Yet do they attempt to rise above their miserable station? Do they grasp their opportunities as we did? Nay. What that lazy fellow needs is his wit sharpening. What do you say? A reduction in salary.

Speaker 1

Thirteen shillings a week? Twelve.

Speaker 5

Eleven. Ten? Ten. Ten is a good round number. I'll just make a note of that. Do you want to break the happy news, or shall I? Jacob.

Speaker 1

Jacob.

Speaker 5

Huh. Waste not, want not.

Speaker 1

Marley was dead to begin with. Now, this must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I'm about to tell you. Oh, yeah. Old Marley was as dead as a doornail, or a coffin nail, if you want to be particular. Scrooge never painted out Marley's name, so there it hung for years afterwards over their place of business. And sometimes people new to the firm called Scrooge, Scrooge, and sometimes Marley. But he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Speaker 6

God rest ye Mary, gentleman, let nothing you dismay, for Jesus Christ our Saviour was born upon this day.

Speaker 1

Oh, but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone was Ebenezer Scrooge. A wrenching, squeezing, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner. Hard, sharp as flint. From which no steel had ever struck out generous fire. Secret, self-contained, and as solitary as an oyster. He carried his own low temperature, always about with him. He iced his office in the dog days of summer, and didn't thaw it 1 degree at Christmas.

Speaker 5

Resting merrily enough, Cratchit.

Speaker 2

No. Sorry, Mr. Scrooge.

Speaker 7

A merry Christmas, uncle. And God save you.

Speaker 5

God save me indeed from such as you, nephew. A merry Christmas, thou. Humbug.

Speaker 7

You don't mean that, I'm sure.

Speaker 5

I do. What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

Speaker 7

And what right have you to be dismal? You're rich enough.

Speaker 5

That I am. And through my own graft. Out upon a merry Christmas, you young fool. What's Christmas but a time for paying bills with no money? A time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer.

Speaker 7

Well, don't be cross, uncle.

Speaker 5

If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding. Uncle! And buried in the centre of four lonely roads with a stake of holly through his heart. Uncle! It should. Keep Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine. But you don't let me leave it alone.

Speaker 7

There are many things from which I have derived good without profiting. But I've always thought of Christmas as a good time. A kind, forgiving, charitable time. The only time in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely and to think of people below them. as if they really were fellow travellers to the grave. And therefore, Uncle, 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.

Speaker 5

Another sound from you, Cratchit, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation. You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

Speaker 7

I might at that.

Speaker 5

Just what that place needs, another Poppinjay.

Speaker 7

Come, dine with us tomorrow.

Speaker 5

Us.

Speaker 7

With my wife and me.

Speaker 5

Your wife. Saddled with such baggage at your age, and no doubt a gaggle of hungry mouths on the way. You'll have children. Boys. Those boys will grow up bad, of course, and run wild in the street without shoes or stockings.

Speaker 7

Good heavens, I trust not.

Speaker 5

Why on earth did you marry?

Speaker 7

Because I fell in love.

Speaker 5

I'll retire to Bedlam. Good afternoon.

Speaker 7

I want nothing from you, uncle. I ask nothing of you. Why can't we be friends? Mother would have wanted her.

Speaker 5

Good afternoon.

Speaker 7

I am sorry with all my heart to find you so resolute, but I've made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So, a merry Christmas, uncle. Good afternoon. And a happy New Year.

Speaker 5

Good afternoon.

Speaker 7

Well, Mr. Cratchit, I know I can rely on a warmer welcome this side of my uncle's door, eh?

Speaker 2

Indeed, sir.

Speaker 7

And what of your plans for the great day?

Speaker 2

The usual, sir. All the family ran to Camden Town. Yeah, my Martha's quite the young lady now, and his apprentice to the milliners. And I've been on a situation for young Peter that could be of great help to the whole family. Things... being a wee bit tight.

Speaker 7

Yes, indeed. And the little fellow, Tim.

Speaker 2

He is well, sir. Quite well.

Speaker 1

Mightily glad to hear it.

Speaker 8

Screw your marleys.

Speaker 7

Just through there. And the best of luck. And Merry Christmas, Mr. Cratchit.

Speaker 2

Merry Christmas, sir.

Speaker 8

Mr. Scrooge, is it or Mr. Marley.

Speaker 5

Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. Oh, dear. He died seven years ago this very night.

Speaker 8

Awfully sorry, I'm sure. But no doubt his generosity is well represented by his surviving partner.

Speaker 5

As to that, ladies, you may rest assured.

Speaker 8

You see, at this time of year, Mr Scrooge, this festive season, we like to do what we can to provide for the poor and destitute. As you can imagine, they suffer greatly. Things being what they are.

Speaker 5

Yes.

Speaker 9

Many thousands are in want of common necessities, food, shelter. Hundreds of thousands are in want of common comfort.

Speaker 8

And oh, how little is required to throw a modicum of sunshine. to be kind.

Speaker 5

Are there no prisons?

Speaker 9

Plenty of prisons, sir.

Speaker 5

And the union workhouses, are they still in operation?

Speaker 8

They are, sir, still. I wish I could say they were not.

Speaker 5

The treadmill and the Poor Lord, in full vigor.

Speaker 9

Both very busy, sir.

Speaker 5

I'm very glad to hear it, Tammy. I was afraid for a moment that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course.

Speaker 9

I think you misunderstand us, Mr. Scrooge. We're trying to raise some money to buy the poor some food and means of warmth.

Speaker 8

We choose this time, and this is a time above all others, when want is keenly felt and abundance rejoices. What shall we put you down for?

Speaker 5

Nothing.

Speaker 9

You wish to be anonymous.

Speaker 3

I wish to be left alone.

Speaker 5

Since you ask me what I wish, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I hope to support the establishments I have mentioned. They cost enough. And those who are badly off must go there.

Speaker 8

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

Speaker 5

If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the selfless population. Sir! The poor have no earthly right or business to be born. My business occupies me constantly. Good afternoon.

Speaker 1

So the bleak, dark day passed into night. The ancient town of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peering slyly down at Scrooge through a gothic window and the wall became invisible, and struck the hours of the quarters with his head in the clouds, with such tremulous vibrations afterwards, as if his teeth were chattering at his frozen head up there, the cold became intense. Balls for the blind.

Speaker 4

Bombs for the blind! Evening, John. Oh, hello, Tom. Arthur. What's this? Go on, Arthur. Go. Wait. Oh, he's a good boy. He's a good boy. Let's get you warm, John. Oh, thank you, Tom. You can't catch me.

Speaker 10

Yes, you can.

Speaker 5

You'll want the whole day off tomorrow, I suppose.

Speaker 2

It's quite convenient.

Speaker 5

It's never convenient. A day's wages for no work. But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

Speaker 10

Bombs for the blind! Bombs for the blind.

Speaker 11

Good boy.

Speaker 4

Good boy.

Speaker 2

Merry Christmas.

Speaker 11

Oh, thank you, sir. Merry Christmas.

Speaker 4

Offer. Come.

Speaker 1

Tom. Hey, Bob.

Speaker 4

There you go, my buck. A compliment of the season.

Speaker 1

Thank you, Tom. And to you, hey. You can run, but you can't come. Are you any good?

Speaker 4

About as good as a pint in Maki Joshi to tell you. But I'm willing to try. Come on, then.

Speaker 1

Hello, below there.

Speaker 2

We've got you.

Speaker 12

Mister Scrooge, I must have a word. Who are you? Edward Boniface, sir. You'll recall that I came...

Speaker 5

I do. Indeed I do. A little matter of bee, bee, bee, bee, bee. Seven pounds, three shillings and six.

Speaker 12

My youngest was taken very bad, sir, with the scarlet fever, and we had nothing put by to pay for the doctors.

Speaker 5

Spare me your tedious narrative, sir. Repayment of the loan falls due in two days, does it not?

Speaker 12

I must have more time, sir.

Speaker 5

More time.

Speaker 12

Yes, sir. I've been working the Atney coaches until I don't know what o'clock just to make the ends meet. And the missus is doing her bit too. Another fortnight.

Speaker 5

Two days, Mr Boniface. Seven pounds, three shillings and six. I can make no exceptions.

Speaker 12

I cannot do it, sir. And if I cannot pay, I shall go to prison.

Speaker 5

Then pray, do not let me detain you. will be able to provide your own transportation at least.

Speaker 12

For Christ's sake, Mr. Scrooge.

Speaker 5

Get up.

Speaker 12

Show mercy! Get up! It is Christmas for he, whose name it is we honour, show a little charity.

Speaker 5

Get up, you ridiculous little man. Or would you prefer I raise the debt higher?

Speaker 1

Scrooge lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner, Marley. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, up a yard, in a lowering pile of buildings which had so little business being there that one couldn't help fancy it had run up there as a young house playing hide and seek with other houses and forgotten the way out again. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands.

Speaker 5

Humbug. Some disorder of the stomach, I warrant.

Speaker 1

A bit of bad beef.

Speaker 5

A blot of mustard. It's humbug still.

Speaker 1

I won't.

Speaker 5

I won't believe it.

Speaker 1

How now?

Speaker 5

What do you want with me?

Speaker 3

Much.

Speaker 1

Who are you?

Speaker 3

Ask me who I was.

Speaker 5

Who were you, then, most pedantic for a ghost?

Speaker 3

In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

Speaker 5

Jacob? Can you... Can you sit down?

Speaker 3

I can.

Speaker 5

Do it, then.

Speaker 1

You don't believe in me?

Speaker 5

Well, I... I don't. I have read about such phantasms. Why, a slight disturbance of the stomach can affect the senses. Do you see that toothpick?

Speaker 3

I do.

Speaker 5

Well, you're not looking at it.

Speaker 3

But I see it. Notwithstanding...

Speaker 5

Well, I have but to swallow that and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. You all know more than a fragment of underdone potato... There's more of gravy than the grave about you.

Speaker 3

Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me or not?

Speaker 5

I do, I must. But why have you come to me?

Speaker 3

It is required of every man that the spirit within him walk abroad amongst his fellow men. If that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world all. Woe is me, and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared in life and turned to happiness.

Speaker 1

You are fettered.

Speaker 5

Why?

Speaker 3

I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it, link by link and yard by yard. I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.

Speaker 1

Is its pattern strange to you? What do you mean?

Speaker 3

Would you know the length and weight of the strong chain you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas eves ago. You have labored on it since. It is a ponderous change. But, Jacob, you were always a good man of business. Business?! Mankind was my business! Charity, mercy, benevolence were all my business. At this time of the rolling year I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed star which led the wise men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me? I cannot rest. I cannot stay. I cannot linger anywhere. Hear me. My time is almost gone. Tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob. I have none to give. Save this. You have yet a hope and chance of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring Ebenezer Scrooge.

Speaker 5

You were always a good friend to me.

Speaker 3

You will be visited by three spirits.

Speaker 5

Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

Speaker 3

It is.

Speaker 1

Then I think I'd rather not.

Speaker 3

Without their visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow night when the bell tolls one.

Speaker 5

Couldn't I take them all at once and have it over with Jacob?

Speaker 3

Expect the second upon the next night at the same hour. Expect the third upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ceased to vibrate. Remember what has passed between us, Ebenezer Scrooge. Look to see me no more.

Speaker 6

Oh.

Speaker 12

Oh.

Speaker 5

The... Tum...

Speaker 1

Bug. When Scrooge awoke, it was so dark that, looking out from the bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour.

Speaker 5

Six o'clock.

Speaker 2

Seven.

Speaker 5

Eight o'clock. It isn't possible. It was past two when I went to... The clock's wrong. It must be an icicle in the works. Twelve.

Speaker 2

Is it noon?

Speaker 5

What has happened to the sun? I can't have slept through a whole day and into another night. A quarter past, what was it Marley said? Expect the first spirit when the clock strikes one. The hour and nothing more.

Speaker 1

Are you...

Speaker 5

Are you the spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

Speaker 4

I am.

Speaker 1

Who? What are you?

Speaker 4

I am the ghost of Christmas past.

Speaker 5

Long past.

Speaker 4

No. Your past.

Speaker 5

I see. Would you... Would you mind just putting on that cap of yours again? I cannot quite...

Speaker 4

What? Would you so soon put out with worldly hands this wonderful light I give? Is it not enough that you, Ebenezer Scrooge, are one of those whose efforts made this cap and forced me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow?

Speaker 5

I meant no offence, Spirit, and I can't recall having had any involvement in your bomiting. What business brings you here?

Speaker 4

Your welfare.

Speaker 5

I can't help thinking a good night's sleep will be...

Speaker 4

Your reclamation, then.

Speaker 5

Reclamation? I'm not a tract of Dutch fen.

Speaker 4

Rise and walk with me.

Speaker 5

I am not properly attired, spirit. And did I mention that I have a cold in the head, and I am mortal and liable to fall?

Speaker 4

Bear but a touch of my hand there, and you shall be upheld in more than this.

Speaker 5

Good heavens.

Speaker 4

You know this place.

Speaker 5

No, I could walk it blindfold. I was bred here. I was... a boy here.

Speaker 4

Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?

Speaker 12

It's nothing, is it? It's A pimple.

Speaker 5

If you have business with me, press on. Let's be done with it.

Speaker 10

There it is.

Speaker 5

Well, there's Will Scorrige, just as I remember him. He was a funny little fellow, was Will. He could never sit still. They always said he had ants in his britches. And Dan. Dan something or other. What was his name? I liked him. Always hoped we could be friends. But... Well, they must be going home. Home for the Christmas holidays.

Speaker 4

These are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.

Speaker 5

Oh. For the best, I'm sure. What would I have to say to them after all these years?

Speaker 4

The school is not quite deserted. A solitary child...

Speaker 5

Yes, yes, I know.

Speaker 4

...Neglected by his friends is left there still.

Speaker 5

You were mistaken, spirit. I wasn't quite friendless. There's Ali Baba. And the Sultan's groom, turned upside down by the genie. Serves him right. What business had he to be married to the princess? There's Robin Hood. And Robinson Crusoe. And the parrot, green body, yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of its head.

Speaker 1

Robinson Crusoe.

Speaker 5

Where have you been, Robinson Crusoe?

Speaker 12

Poor boy.

Speaker 5

I wish that... No, no, it's too late now.

Speaker 4

What is the matter? Nothing.

Speaker 5

Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something, that's all.

Speaker 4

You did give him something. A steel rule across the back. Let us see another Christmas.

Speaker 6

Where the knees are! Furn! Son.

Speaker 1

Oh, home for the jolly holidays at last, eh, Master Scrooge? Yes, sir. It's beginning to think you'll be stalking these here corridors until the last trump. A young buck like you has prospects.

Speaker 3

He must travel.

Speaker 1

How I wish I'd travelled, yes.

Speaker 3

Trichinopoly, by thunder, there's a name to conjure with.

Speaker 1

O' the sultry shores of Lake Titicaca. I wouldn't give to be in those top boots of yours, young sir, Care for some cake, boy, made of myself. Yes, delicious. Delicious.

Speaker 3

What do you think? I have hopes of prizes.

Speaker 13

It's not just for the holidays, dear brother. Father is so much kinder than he used to be that home is like heaven. You ought to be a man, Ebenezer, and never come back to this dreadful place.

Speaker 3

The frozen wastes of the Ross Ice Shelf.

Speaker 1

There you are, Pat. You have Master Scrooge's box.

Speaker 2

Yes, Mr. Thrample.

Speaker 1

Care for some cake, boy? Made of yourself.

Speaker 2

Is it the same stuff as last year, sir? It is. I'm begging your pardon, sir. I'd rather not.

Speaker 1

My very best wishes, and a very Merry Christmas, Master Scrooge, wherever you pitch up.

Speaker 6

Thank you, sir. Goodbye, sir.

Speaker 3

Goodbye. Come on. Oh, Sumatra. Sumatra. How it rolls off the tongue like an overripe Seville orange. Oh, Seville.

Speaker 4

Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. But she had a large heart.

Speaker 5

So she had. You are right. I will not deny it, spirit. God forbid.

Speaker 4

She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

Speaker 5

One child.

Speaker 4

True. You're...

Speaker 5

My nephew, yes.

Speaker 6

What's all this, fan? Secrets? What have you and father been plotting?

Speaker 13

You're to be 'prentice, brother. 'Prentice in a city to such a little man. The name of...

Speaker 4

Fezziwig.

Speaker 5

Bless his heart, it old Fezziwig come alive again.

Speaker 12

Yo-ho there, Ebenezer.

Speaker 6

Yo-ho.

Speaker 12

Yo-ho, Jacob.

Speaker 4

Yo-ho.

Speaker 5

Jacob Marley, to be sure. Bless me. Yes, here he is. I'd quite forgotten he was ever young.

Speaker 12

Yo-ho, my boys. No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Jacob. Christmas, Ebenezer. Let's have the shutters up before a man can say Jack Robinson. Hilly-ho! Hilly-ho! Clear away, my lads. Let's have lots of room here. Drinks, Jacob. Hilly-ho, hilly-ho. Ebenezer. Oh, hey! Brilliant, dear boy.

Speaker 4

She's here, sir.

Speaker 11

They're all here.

Speaker 12

Here? Of course they're here. How come you have a Christmas ball without them? Where's my husband? I'm here, dear. Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas, bouncy. Daughter, Merry Christmas. You're very good health, Mr. F. You're very good health, Mr. Bunker. Oh, my dear, the Sir Rossi McCoverley. May I crave.

Speaker 8

But I will throttle you with your own shirts front if you don't...

Speaker 1

And you big ***** and be cricket of the lady from under you.

Speaker 10

Mr. Bunker. Come on. Hey.

Speaker 1

Quite well, Mr. Riff. Yes. Well, yes. How's the Negus? Oh, capital, sir, capital. And the pigeon pie, fit for an emperor. Oh, God, sir, what, Larks? You're a proper Father Christmas.

Speaker 4

A small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude. Small? Why, is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money. Three or four, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

Speaker 5

It isn't that. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy. To make our service light or burdensome, a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it... As if it cost a fortune.

Speaker 4

What is the matter?

Speaker 5

Nothing particular.

Speaker 4

Something, I think... No.

Speaker 5

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

Speaker 4

Belle.

Speaker 5

Oh, my sweet Belle. Yes. it was that Christmas.

Speaker 7

What? Going so soon, Jacob?

Speaker 11

Time and tide, Ebenezer. Time and tide. Not a word to old Fezziwig, but I have a financial speculation of my own to attend to. And ain't it ripening nicely.

Speaker 7

But Jacob, on Christmas Eve.

Speaker 11

Christmas be hanged. Business don't take a holiday, Ebenezer. You'd be wise to remember that. In fact, why don't you come in with me on it? You have a few bob put by. I've seen you counting it.

Speaker 7

Yes, against the day.

Speaker 11

What do you mean?

Speaker 7

The day that I marry? Raise a family.

Speaker 11

There's a chill in the air, my friend.

Speaker 7

They say the Thames will freeze again.

Speaker 11

'Tis the chill wind of a pecuniary reality I speak of. We will soon live in a world of smoke and manufactories, Ebenezer, of slog and sweat. Fred, old fizzywigs, one of a dying breed. We must look to the future if we survive. So, what do you say? There's still time to invest this little venture of mine.

Speaker 7

Maybe you're right, Jacob, but I have an eye on a different sort of future tonight.

Speaker 11

Well, all up to you, my friend. But think about what I've said.

Speaker 7

I shall. I shall. Merry Christmas, Jacob. Would you like to... Yes.

Speaker 4

My time grows short. Come.

Speaker 5

A moment longer, spirit, I beg.

Speaker 7

What is this all about?

Speaker 9

Well, it doesn't matter.

Speaker 7

Indeed, I think it matters a great deal. And there's no one else, if that's what you're thinking.

Speaker 9

Yes, of course not. I know that, Ebenezer. It's not someone else. It's something. I have been displaced by an idol.

Speaker 7

An idol.

Speaker 9

A golden one.

Speaker 7

Oh, I see. So this is the even-handed dealing of the world. There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty, and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth.

Speaker 9

You fear the world too much. Remember all those hopes. All those beautiful dreams. The dreams that we had together. Replaced by this obsession.

Speaker 7

Obsession.

Speaker 9

With money. Money above all things.

Speaker 7

I have grown up, Belle. That's all. But none of that changes my feelings for you.

Speaker 9

Our engagement is an old one. We did it when we were both poor and content to be so. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.

Speaker 7

I was a boy. Have I ever sought release from you?

Speaker 9

In words, no. Never.

Speaker 7

Well, in what then?

Speaker 9

In a changed nature. In an altered spirit. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now?

Speaker 7

Of course.

Speaker 9

I wish I could believe you, Ebenezer, but the man you have become would never marry a penniless girl. I release you. with a full heart for the love of him you once were.

Speaker 7

Belle.

Speaker 9

May you be happy in the life that you have chosen.

Speaker 11

Wait! Oh, it has a ring to it, Should have been your name first, Jacob. An act of generosity for an old friend. Won't happen again. Trouble.

Speaker 7

No, trouble. Just... a silly dream.

Speaker 11

No profit in dreams, Ebenezer.

Speaker 7

You there, boy. Take this to Scrabbit's on Monmouth Street. See what you can get for it.

Speaker 5

My sweet Belle.

Speaker 4

You wish to see her again.

Speaker 5

I do.

Speaker 4

Then let us see one shade more.

Speaker 10

Oh yeah, a Christmas tree. Look at the presents.

Speaker 2

I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon, my dear.

Speaker 9

Who?

Speaker 2

Guess.

Speaker 9

How can I guess?

Speaker 2

Guess.

Speaker 9

Mr. Scrooge.

Speaker 2

Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window, and as it was not shut up and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him there with that miserly partner of his. Two peas in a pod, those two. Two peas in a pod. Ma.

Speaker 6

Look what Elizabeth has done to my Dolly Doe kid.

Speaker 5

Spirit, remove me from this place. Why do you delight to torture me?

Speaker 4

I told you. These were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are. Do not blame me.

Speaker 3

Remove me.

Speaker 4

I cannot bear it.

Speaker 1

Scrooge awoke in the middle of a prodigious... Snore.

Speaker 5

Another night. Another night has passed, and I'm to expect the second spirit on the stroke of one. Perhaps it will come. Yes. Yes, that's it. They'll see that I've learned my lesson. Oh. Yes. Hello.

Speaker 1

Scrooge was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances. Nothing between a baby and a rhinoceros would have astonished him very greatly. But being prepared for almost anything, he was by no means prepared for nothing.

Speaker 5

It's worth not knowing than confronting the brute, whatever it is.

Speaker 12

Ebony the Scrooge.

Speaker 2

Come in. Come in.

Speaker 12

And know me better, man. You have never seen the likes of me before. And never... I... I am the ghost of Christmas present.

Speaker 5

I guessed as much.

Speaker 12

And yet, you have not walked abroad with any of my brothers, my elder brothers, have you, you weird little man?

Speaker 5

How many brothers do you have?

Speaker 12

More than eighteen hundred.

Speaker 5

A tremendous family to provide for. I suppose you must have independent means. Spirit. Conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion and learned a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have ought to teach me, let me profit by it.

Speaker 12

Touch my rum.

Speaker 1

Don't mind yourself, you great useless article, before I all swip you.

Speaker 14

I'd like to see you try. I've had a belly full of your throats to assassinate me.

Speaker 1

Mind you, on account of the day, it does seem a bit...

Speaker 14

Right, Harry, my lad. A merry Christmas to you and yours.

Speaker 1

And mine to yours. Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your horn?

Speaker 12

There is. My own.

Speaker 5

Would it apply to any kind of dinner given on this day?

Speaker 12

To any kindly given. To a poor one most.

Speaker 5

Why, to a poor one most.

Speaker 12

Because it needs it most.

Speaker 8

Mind, Peter. Get out from under my skirts, will you? Sorry, Mum. As if I haven't got enough to do. And will you leave those taters alone? What do you think you look like?

Speaker 7

A proper swell, that's what. Going strolling in the Vauxhall Gardens and that one, my lady love.

Speaker 8

Well, you're ruining your father's best collar, and I'm the one that has to launder it. No, Lady Olavia, with your mouth full of taters. Oh, here comes trouble.

Speaker 6

Is the goose cooked, Mum?

Speaker 13

We was outside the bakers looking at the candies, and there were oranges and lemons like cricket balls. And...

Speaker 6

Then we smacked the goose, and we knew it was ours.

Speaker 7

The great ratchet goose of Camden Town. It's a legend. Is them taters done, Peter? What's left of them?

Speaker 8

I don't know what's keeping your father and Tim. Martha went as late last Christmas Day by half an hour. Here's Martha, Martha.

Speaker 6

Wait till you see the goose, Martha.

Speaker 8

How late you are, love.

Speaker 9

Well, we had a deal of work to finish up last night and had to clear away this morning, Mum.

Speaker 8

Well, never mind, as long as you have come. Sit down by the fire, love. Have a warm bless you. No, there's dad coming.

Speaker 6

Hide, Martha. Hide.

Speaker 1

Hide? Where?

Speaker 4

Under the table.

Speaker 2

Oh, go, go, go, go, go, go. Happy New Year. Hello, my dears. Hey, where's Martha?

Speaker 8

She's not coming.

Speaker 2

Not coming. Not coming. On Christmas Day. I know.

Speaker 8

Ain't it a shame?

Speaker 7

Awful shame.

Speaker 6

Fearful shame.

Speaker 8

No, I can't bear it, Dad. Even if it's only through a joke. Here I am.

Speaker 2

Come here, my girl. Look at you. Come on then, up you go.

Speaker 6

Come here, the pudding in the copper, Tim, singing our archangels it is.

Speaker 11

It's all right, you go. I'm a bit tired.

Speaker 8

How was he today, love?

Speaker 2

As good as gold and better. He gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much. He thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me coming home that he hoped people saw him in the church because of how he is. And that it might be pleasant for them to remember upon Christmas Day who made the lame walk and blind men see. It's getting stronger, my love. I know he is. He'll grow hale and hearty. Now, where's that punch? Oh, punch! Oh, my dear, sit yourselves down. Christmas passing by with that. Watch yourself on them taters now. Oh, can we go? Duck.

Speaker 8

Tim, dinner's ready.

Speaker 2

Here we go. Coming through. Thank you.

Speaker 8

Ready. Does it taste as good?

Speaker 2

It's hot. Oh, my dears. Such a goose. There never was such a goose.

Speaker 4

I don't think I've ruined.

Speaker 8

I don't know where you put it. I feel quite faint. What if I haven't done enough? I have to confess. I have my doubts about the quantity of flour. Don't be daft.

Speaker 11

It'd be right as ninepence. What is it, ever night, eh, dead.

Speaker 2

Never in all these Christmases is it ever less than superlative, my love.

Speaker 8

But what if it breaks when we turn it out? Oh.

Speaker 11

What if burglars have come over the wall and had away with it while we were married with a goose?

Speaker 2

You're all awful. Shh. Look at that. She surpassed herself again, and she, my dears, this pudding, I hereby declare the crowning glory of my dear wife's marital career. Now, I've waited till this day of all days to impart a little information. It's what we in the world of high finance, source, is what we, captains of industry, refer to as an opportunity. I have my eye on a situation for Master Peter Cratchit over yonder. Him, as he's drowning in his dad's Sunday best collar, and as his father's looks besides, a situation that will bring in, if obtained, for five and six weekly.

Speaker 11

Five and six? Peter.

Speaker 2

Blimey! Now, weren't that worth saving up, A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.

Speaker 11

God bless us, everyone.

Speaker 5

Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

Speaker 12

I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney corner and a crutch without an owner carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, none other of my race shall find him here. Oh, no.

Speaker 5

Oh, no kind spirit, say he will be spared.

Speaker 12

What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it and decrease the surplus population. Who are you to decide what men shall live? What men shall die? It might 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! Do you hear the insect on the leaf pronouncing on the excess of life among his hungry brothers in the dust?

Speaker 2

Mr. Scrooge? What? I give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast.

Speaker 8

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'd hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

Speaker 2

My dear, the children, Christmas Day.

Speaker 8

It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow.

Speaker 2

My dear. Christmas Day.

Speaker 8

I'll drink to his health, for your sake and for the day's, not for his. Long life to him. A merry Christmas and a happy New Year. He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt.

Speaker 5

Very gratifying, I'm sure. Did you hear that?

Speaker 2

Here we come, the wassailing among the leaves so green. Here we come, a wandering so fair to be seen. Love and joy come to you, and to you you'll wassail too. And God bless you and send you a happy New Year.

Speaker 1

What place is this?

Speaker 12

A place where miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth. But they know Christmas.

Speaker 2

And all was for an apple, an apple that he took, as Clark is finding written in their book.

Speaker 4

Blessed be the time that an apple taken wise, therefore we must sing it.

Speaker 3

All three men dwell on Flannan Isle to keep the lamp alight. As we steered under the lee, we saw no glimmer through the night.

Speaker 1

Compliments of the season to you, Jeremiah.

Speaker 3

And to you, old pal.

Speaker 4

Sir.

Speaker 1

Bless you, Albert.

Speaker 3

And don't you fret none about the watch, I'll see to it.

Speaker 2

Their necessary search is my watch.

Speaker 4

And you'll be needing your sleep if you're to be fresh and handsome for your misses when we're done. Now, wait till you bump, will you? Bless you, sir. Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas, my boy.

Speaker 7

He said Christmas was a humbug, as I live, and he believed it too.

Speaker 14

More shame for him, Fred.

Speaker 11

He sounds like a comical old fellow.

Speaker 7

He's not as pleasant as he might be, but his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

Speaker 14

I'm sure he's very rich, Fred. At least you always tell me so.

Speaker 7

And what of that, my dear? His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. And he hasn't the satisfaction of thinking he's ever going to benefit us with it.

Speaker 14

I have no patience with him.

Speaker 7

Oh, I'm sorry for him. I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself. Always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us and he won't come to dine with us and what's the consequence? Well, he don't lose much of a dinner.

Speaker 14

Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner.

Speaker 7

Well, I'm very glad to hear it because I haven't great faith in these young housekeepers. What do you say, Topper?

Speaker 11

I ain't got the right to express an opinion, Fred, for I am a wretched bachelor and therefore no better than an outcast.

Speaker 7

Anyway, all I'll say is that by not making merry with us, my uncle loses a few pleasant moments. Pleasanter than he can find in his mouldy old office or his dusty chambers. And I mean to give him the same chance every year.

Speaker 1

I'll bully for you.

Speaker 7

Whether he likes it or not. Right, that's enough of that. Shall I have a dance? Why not?

Speaker 11

And for you, my dear.

Speaker 1

Ooh! Blind man's bath! Oh, Christ, who wants it?

Speaker 7

Topper, come here, you handsome devil. I'll be taking this. And you will be needing this.

Topper, can you see? No.

Speaker 1

Spin it round. Oh, who's there?

Speaker 4

Who's there?

Speaker 10

No, hang on.

Speaker 11

Too sick. Too sick?

Speaker 7

How does he do it? With the resolution of an 80-gunner, Mr. Topper sails towards the object of his affections.

Speaker 14

Fred, you've cooked this up between you.

Speaker 1

Oh, shush.

Speaker 11

Oh, my. Miss Polly, it's you.

Speaker 9

Oh, Mr. Topper.

Speaker 1

Finally.

Speaker 4

Is it an animal then?

Speaker 1

Yes. Here's a new game, 1/2 hour longer, spirit I beg.

Speaker 11

Fierce or friendly?

Speaker 9

Nay, Mr. Topper, it's my turn. Is it fist?

Speaker 7

Yes.

Speaker 14

Savage.

Speaker 7

Yes.

Speaker 4

Does it live in Africa?

Speaker 1

No. Europe.

Speaker 7

Yes. A bear. It's a bear.

Speaker 1

Oh. A bear? No.

Speaker 11

Does it live in a menagerie?

Speaker 1

No.

Speaker 14

Not even in London.

Speaker 9

So he lives in London then?

Speaker 1

Oh, yes. You're a horse. Nope.

Speaker 8

A dog. Nope.

Speaker 14

Oh, what is it, sir? Oh, is it a pig? No.

Speaker 8

Oh, I know. I found it out. I know what it is.

Speaker 5

What?

Speaker 8

It's your Uncle Scrooge.

Speaker 7

Very good.

Speaker 11

I call foul.

Speaker 14

Why, Mr. Topper.

Speaker 11

Because Mr. Chokebear there asked if it was a bear, and Fred said no.

Speaker 5

Spirit. You... you are... are spirits' lives so short?

Speaker 12

My life upon this globe is very brief. It ends tonight.

Speaker 5

Tonight.

Speaker 12

Tonight at midnight. Hark, the time is drawing near.

Speaker 5

Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask, but I see something strange and not belonging to yourself protruding from your skirts. Is it a fault or a claw?

Speaker 12

It might be a claw, for all the flesh there is upon it. Look here.

Speaker 5

What delightful children. You must be very proud.

Speaker 1

Spirit, are they yours?

Speaker 12

They are man's, and they cling to me appealing from their fathers. This boy is ignorant. This girl is want. Beware them both. But most of all, beware this boy. For having a refuge or resource? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

Speaker 5

I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. You are about to show me the shadows of things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us. Is that so, spirit? Ghost of the future, I fear you more than any specter I've seen, but as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me? Lead on, then. Lead on.

Speaker 1

The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, spirit. No, I don't know much about it either way. I only know he's dead.

Speaker 11

Old Scratch is gone, When did he die?

Speaker 1

Last night, I believe.

Speaker 7

Why? What was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

Speaker 1

God knows.

Speaker 11

What has he done with his money?

Speaker 1

I don't know. I haven't heard. He left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me, that's all I know. It's liable to be a very cheap funeral. For upon my life, I don't know of anybody to go to it. What say we make up a party, volunteer?

Speaker 7

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

Speaker 1

Well, I am the most disinterested among you, for I never eat lunch and I never wear black gloves, so I'll go if anybody will come with me. Well, now I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure I wasn't his most particular friend, for we used to meet and exchange. not exactly pleasantries.

Speaker 5

They can't be speaking of old Marley, for this is the future, and no... No sign of me in my usual place. But then, naturally not, for I'm resolved to change. And so...

Speaker 8

Well, if we all three haven't met here without meaning it, Charwoman, laundress, undertaker's man. Look here, old Joe.

Speaker 1

What A coincidence, You couldn't have met in a better place than my parlour.

Speaker 3

You was made free of it long ago, you know, and the other two ain't strangers.

Speaker 1

Lord, how that door screeks. There ain't such a rusty bit of metal in the old place as its own hinges, I believe, and I'm sure there's no such old bones here as mine.

Speaker 8

Don't stand sad and as if you was afraid, woman. Who's the wiser? We're not going to poke holes in each other's coats, I suppose.

Speaker 9

No, indeed.

Speaker 2

I should hope not.

Speaker 8

Who's the worse off for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose.

Speaker 9

No, indeed.

Speaker 8

If he wanted to keep him after he was dead, the wicked old screw, why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had a been, he'd have had someone to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying, gasping out his last there alone by himself. So we've all helped ourselves, and where's the arm in that?

Speaker 2

Now, ladies first.

Speaker 8

Oh, we don't stand on ceremony here, I joke.

Speaker 3

No, indeed.

Speaker 8

You go first, Mr. Thursday.

Speaker 2

Cufflinks, a wax seal, and a pencil case.

Speaker 1

No gold in his teeth, I suppose.

Speaker 2

No, I can never get that close. The governor watches me like an orc as it is.

Speaker 1

Well, let me see. Yes. There's your account. I wouldn't give you another sixpence if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Hardly worth the walk. Who's next?

Speaker 9

Me. His boots, some towels and some spoons.

Speaker 1

Oh, and a pair of sugar tongs. Well, there's the reckoning. I always give too much to ladies, it's a weakness of mine. And that is how I would have ruined myself. If you ask for another penny, I should repent of being Selenian and knock off half a crown.

Speaker 8

Now, open my bundle, Joe.

Speaker 1

What do you call this?

Speaker 8

Bed curtains.

Speaker 1

Bed curtains? You mean to say you took them down, rings and all, and him lying there?

Speaker 8

Yeah, I do.

Speaker 6

Why not?

Speaker 1

You was born to make your fortune, and you will certainly do it.

Speaker 8

Don't drop oil up on the blankets now.

Speaker 1

Whose blankets?

Speaker 8

Who else is, do you think? He ain't likely to take cold without them, I daresay. Here.

Speaker 1

He didn't die of anything catching, did he?

Speaker 8

I ain't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things if he did. And you may look through that shirt in there until your eyes ache, but you won't find a hole in it. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it if it hadn't have been for me.

Speaker 1

What do you call a waste in it?

Speaker 8

Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure. Somebody was fool enough to do it. But I took it off again.

Speaker 2

Calico's good enough for him. He's quite as becoming to the body.

Speaker 8

And he can't look uglier than he did in that one.

Speaker 5

Spirit. I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way now. Merciful heaven, what is this? Great God, but this is a dreadful place. In leaving it, I shall not forget its lesson. Let us go. I know what you intend. This poor wretch might be me if he were resurrected now. His first thoughts would be avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares.

Speaker 12

And look what a rich end such concerns have brought him to. I understand you, and I would do it if I could, but I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power.

Speaker 5

If there is any person in the town who feels emotion caused by this man's death, show that person to me.

Speaker 12

Spirit, I beseech you.

Speaker 14

Well, is it good or bad?

Speaker 12

Bad.

Speaker 14

We are quite ruined.

Speaker 12

No, there's hope yet, my love.

Speaker 14

If he relents, there is.

Speaker 12

Why, he is past relenting. He's dead! Yes.

Speaker 14

Oh, Lord, forgive me, but I'm glad. Oh, glad.

Speaker 12

What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night said to me when I tried to visit him and obtain yet another delay, and what I thought was a mere excuse to try and avoid me turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying then.

Speaker 14

Oh, who gets our debt?

Speaker 12

I don't know. But, before that time, we shall be ready with the money. And even if we weren't, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless A creditor in his successor. And we shall sleep tonight with light hearts, my love. Children, come here.

Speaker 5

Let me see some tenderness connected with the death, or that dark chamber spirit which we left just now will be forever present to me.

Speaker 7

And he sat down and called the Twelve and said unto them, If any man shall desire to be the first, the same shall be the last of all and servant of all. And he took a child and set him in the midst of them. And when they had taken them into his arms, he said unto them, Whoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me.

Speaker 8

The colour hurts my eyes. They're all right now. It makes them weak by candlelight. And I wouldn't show wee guys to your father when he comes home for the world. It must be near his time.

Speaker 7

Past it, rather. But I think he's walked a little slower than he used to these last few evenings.

Speaker 8

I have known him walk with... I have known him walk with Tiny Tim. Very fast indeed.

Speaker 7

Me too. Often.

Speaker 6

Me too.

Speaker 8

But he was no trouble. No trouble, was he? Bless him. Oh, there's your father at the door. Dad, sir.

Speaker 2

Hello, my dears. How are you getting on? Oh, look. Hey. That's good work. You'll be finished long before Sunday.

Speaker 8

Sunday? You went today then, Robert.

Speaker 2

Yes, my dear. I wish you could have gone. Would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him I would walk there on a Sunday. You never guess who I saw today, my dear, Mr. Scrooge's nephew. I can't have spoken to him above half a dozen times, but he greeted me like an old friend. And seeing though I was just a little down, you know, I asked what was the matter, on which, for he is the pleasantest spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him, I'm heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit, he said. And heartily sorry for your good wife. By the by, how he ever knew that, I don't know.

Speaker 8

Knew what?

Speaker 2

That you were a good wife.

Speaker 7

Well, everybody knows that.

Speaker 2

Very well observed, my boy. Heartily sorry for your good wife, he said. If I can be of service to you in any way, he said, giving me his card. That is where I live. Pray come to me. That wasn't for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. Really seemed as if he had known our Tim and felt with us.

Speaker 8

I'm sure he's a very good soul.

Speaker 2

You will be sure of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised, mark, what I say, if you got Peter a better situation. We'll get along with you. Well, it's just as likely as not one of these days. But there's plenty of time for that, my dear. However, and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us ever forget poor Tiny Tim, shall we? Or this first parting that there was among us.

Speaker 6

Never, Dad.

Speaker 2

I'm very happy. Very happy.

Speaker 6

Oh, God.

Speaker 4

God.

Speaker 1

My little, little child.

Speaker 2

My little child.

Speaker 5

Spirit, something informs me our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how.

Speaker 1

Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead. Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point, answer me one question.

Speaker 5

Are these the shadows of the things that will be, Or are they shadows of things that may be only? Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, To which if persevered in they must lead, But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me.

Speaker 12

I am that wretched man upon the bed, no spirit. No, no, no.

Speaker 5

The good spirit, you only change the seeds for me and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me by an altered life.

Speaker 3

I tried to warn you, Ebenezer Scrooge. Why did you not heed me? Why?

Speaker 5

But I will. I shall. Say it's not too late. 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. Or the spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.

Speaker 3

Oh, tell me I miss.

Speaker 5

Sponge away the writing on this stone.

Speaker 3

I'm alive.

Speaker 12

God, I'm alive.

Speaker 1

Oh, Jacob, Marley, heaven and the Christmas time be praised for this.

Speaker 5

I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees. They are not torn down.

Speaker 1

They are not torn down, rings and all. They are here.

Speaker 5

Well, I am here. The shadows are the things that would have been maybe dispelled. Well, they will be. I know they will. I don't know what to do.

Speaker 3

A good wash. Clothes.

Speaker 12

Clothes. Awful.

Speaker 1

Horrid.

Speaker 3

Wonderfully awful.

Speaker 1

Wonderfully horrid.

Speaker 12

Well, I don't know what to do.

Speaker 5

I'm as light as a feather. I'm as happy as an angel. I'm as merry as a schoolboy. I'm as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody. A merry Christmas to you, madam. Felicitations to you, sir, and to your charming wife. Why is no one wearing a hat? A happy New Year! A happy New Year to all the world. Smile, sir. It is the season. There's the saucepan that had the gruel in it. There's the door by which the ghost of Jacob Marley ended. This is where the ghost of Christmas presents sat. This is the window where I saw the wandering spirits. It's all right. It's all true. It all happened.

Speaker 12

I don't know what day of the month it is. I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby. Oh, what a blessed day. What a blessed, blessed day.

Speaker 6

What's today?

Speaker 5

What's today, my fine fellow?

Speaker 6

Today? Why, Christmas Day?

Speaker 1

It's Christmas Day.

Speaker 5

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. Hello, my fine fellow.

Speaker 6

Hello.

Speaker 5

Do you know the poultry is in the next street but one at the corner?

Speaker 6

I should hope I did.

Speaker 5

Oh, an intelligent boy, a remarkable boy. Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging out there? Not the little prize turkey, the big one.

Speaker 6

What? The one as big as me.

Speaker 5

What A delightful boy. It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck.

Speaker 6

It's hanging there now.

Speaker 5

Is it? Go and buy it.

Speaker 6

Walker.

Speaker 5

No, I'm in earnest. Go and buy it and tell them to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than 5 minutes, and I'll give you half a crown.

Speaker 6

Half a crown.

Speaker 5

I shall send it to Bob Cratchit. He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Now, Where does he live? It's Camden Town. Yes. Camden Town.

Speaker 1

The hand with which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but right it he did, chuckling all the while till tears rolled down his shining face. Nor was shaving an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much. And shaving requires attention, even if you don't dance while you're at it. But even if he'd cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking plaster on it and been quite satisfied. From somewhere in the depths of a mouldy old closet, he found a hat which had at least pretensions to respectability, and a suit of clothes that had not yet succumbed to the moth and the cobweb. At last, dressed all at his best, he got out into the streets.

Speaker 5

I shall love it as long as I live. Scarcely ever looked at it before. Such an honest expression on its face. It's a wonderful knock. He is the turkey. Hello. How are you? Mr. Scrooge? Yes, Merry Christmas.

Speaker 4

Well, the lad said it was you. I hardly believe that he... Oh, this is too much now.

Speaker 1

No, keep it, keep it.

Speaker 5

Take a cab to Camden Town or the weight of that bird will see you off.

Speaker 4

Thank you, sir. Merry Christmas, sir.

Speaker 3

Oh, heavens.

Speaker 5

A little matter of half a... half a sovereign, wasn't it?

Speaker 1

People were by this time pouring forth into the streets, just as he had seen them with a ghost of Christmas present. And walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded everyone with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant that two or three good-humoured fellows cried, Good morning, sir. Merry Christmas to you. And Scrooge said ever afterwards that of all the blithe sounds he'd ever heard, these were the blithest to his ears.

Speaker 5

Oh, my dear lady, how do you do? I hope you succeeded in your charitable endeavors yesterday. It was so very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, madam.

Speaker 8

Mr. Scrooge.

Speaker 5

Yes. Yes, that is my name, and I fear it is not pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And would you have the goodness to accept...

Speaker 1

Good God.

Speaker 8

Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?

Speaker 5

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

Speaker 8

I will. Compliments of the season to you.

Speaker 5

Oh, thank you.

Speaker 9

Ebenezer.

Speaker 5

Belle.

Speaker 2

My dear, we're starting.

Speaker 10

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant. O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him. O the king of angels O come, let us adore O come, let us adore
O come, let us adore In Christ the Lord God of God Light of life Lord, ye are not the
Virgin's room. Very God, we gotten not created. Oh, come let us adore. Oh, come let us
adore. Glory to God. Open, let us the door. Open, let us the door. Open, let us the door.

Speaker 13

I hear footsteps. Oh, who's that?

Speaker 3

It's I, your Uncle Scrooge.

Speaker 5

Will you, will you let me in, Fred?

Speaker 7

Well, bless my soul, I'll let you in. My dearest uncle, I hardly knew you.

Speaker 5

Look happy. I am. as happy as only an old sinner could be on this wonderful day. And
who is this? As if I couldn't guess. Why, my dear, how lovely you are. I'm so very pleased
to meet you.

Speaker 14

Fred has spoken of you so often.

Speaker 5

I never thought that I'd-- No more did I. I'm not much of a Christmas present, I'm afraid, but if I may belatedly accept your invitation to dinner.

Speaker 14

Of course. Oh, of course.

Speaker 1

Oh, but he was early at the office the next morning. He was early there. If only he could be there first and catch Bob Cratchit coming in late. That's what he'd set his heart upon.

Speaker 12

Oh, Mr Scrooge.

Speaker 5

It's you, the cabman.

Speaker 12

Yes, sir. I haven't slept a wink, sir, for the sake of Christmas.

Speaker 5

Christmas was yesterday, Mr. Boniface, and a little matter of seven pounds, three shillings, and six has fallen due. So... There's 5, 6, 7, and... oh, take it all. Are we all square?

Speaker 12

Eh.

Speaker 3

It's a little Christmas gift, my lad.

Speaker 12

Oh, God bless you, Mr. Scrooge. No. God bless you.

Speaker 5

Oh, and... Oh, but Bob Cratchit's late, dear me. What shall I do?

Speaker 1

Cratchit, what time do you...

Speaker 5

Cratchit, what time do you... I don't think I can do it anymore. I've been smiling so much.

Speaker 1

Catch it?

Speaker 5

What do you mean by coming here at this hour of the day?

Speaker 2

I'm very sorry, sir.

Speaker 1

I'm behind my time.

Speaker 5

You are? Yes, I think you are. Full 18 and a half minutes. Step this way, if you please.

Speaker 2

It is only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. I was making rather...

Speaker 5

I'll tell you what, my friend. I'm not going to stand for this any longer. And therefore... And therefore... I'm about to raise your salary. It's all right, it's all right. There's no need to fetch the straight-waist good or the men from the bedlam. A merry Christmas, Bob. A merrier Christmas, Bob, my dear fellow, than I have ever given you. I will raise your salary and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we'll discuss your affairs this very afternoon over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop.

Speaker 1

Make up the fires and buy a new coal scuttle before you dot another eye, Bob Cratchit. Oh, Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all and infinitely more. And to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a master, as good a friend, as good a man, as any in the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough in the good old world. Some people laughed at him to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh. His own heart laughed, and that was quite enough for him. He had no more dealings with spirits, but lived upon the total abstinence principle ever after. And it was often said of him that he kept Christmas well, if any man alive ever possessed that knowledge.

Speaker 8

My dear, Timothy, Tim, it's time.

Speaker 1

Dinner? Oh, come on, there, give us a hand up. Thank you very much. There we are. Lovely. Right. Yes, everybody.

Speaker 10

There we go.

Speaker 1

Oh, there never was such a goose. A Merry Christmas to you all. Merry Christmas. God bless us, everyone.

Speaker 10

Gay Lordly breathes me On this happy morning Teach you to be the glory day Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him in Christ .