

FRED. There are many things from which I have derived good but not profited, Christmas among them. And I have always thought of Christmas as a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. The only time I know of in the year when men and women open their hearts freely, and think of people below them as fellow-passengers to the grave. And though it has never put gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good and I say, God bless it!

BOB CRATCHIT. (*Applauding:*) God bless it, indeed!

SCROOGE. (*To BOB:*) Let me hear another sound from you, Bob Cratchit, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! (*To FRED, insulting him:*) And as for you, nephew, you're such a powerful speaker I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

FRED. Don't be angry, uncle. Come dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE. No.

FRED. But why?

SCROOGE. Why did you marry against my wishes?

FRED. Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE. (*With a growl, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a "Merry Christmas":*) Because you fell in love! (*Rolling his eyes, pointing FRED to the door:*) Good afternoon!

FRED. I want nothing from you; why cannot we be friends?

SCROOGE. Good afternoon.

FRED. I am sorry with all my heart to find you so stubborn. But I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a Merry Christmas to you, uncle!

SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

FRED. And a Happy New Year!

SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

FRED. Merry Christmas to you and your family, Bob.

BOB CRATCHIT. The same to you, Fred.

(SFX: Door with bell opens/closes.)

(FRED exits.)

SCROOGE. (*Muttering:*) There's another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

(SFX: Knock on door, door with bell opens/closes.)

(GENTLEWOMAN *enters.*)

GENTLEWOMAN. (*Referring to a list.*) Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE. Mr. Marley has been dead seven years ago tonight. You have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge.

GENTLEWOMAN. Well, now, Mr. Scrooge, at this festive season of the year it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE. Are there no prisons?

GENTLEWOMAN. Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE. And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

GENTLEWOMAN. They are. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE. The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigor, then?

GENTLEWOMAN. Both very busy, sir.

SCROOGE. I'm very glad to hear it.

GENTLEWOMAN. As they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE. Nothing!

GENTLEWOMAN. Oh, you wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE. I wish to be left alone. 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 help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.

GENTLEWOMAN. 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. (*Beat.*) It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon!

GENTLEWOMAN. Well!

SCROOGE. Show this woman the door, Cratchit!

BOB CRATCHIT. Yes, sir. *(To the GENTLEWOMAN:)* This way, please. *(Aside to GENTLEWOMAN:)* It would please me greatly if I might contribute tuppence to your charity.

SCROOGE. Cratchit!

BOB CRATCHIT. Coming, Mr. Scrooge!

GENTLEWOMAN. You are a most generous soul, sir. Which is more than I can say for your employer.

SCROOGE. Cratchit!

BOB CRATCHIT. Coming! *(Aside to GENTLEWOMAN:)* Merry Christmas to you.

GENTLEWOMAN. And to you, sir.

(SFX: Door with bell opens/closes.)

(GENTLEWOMAN exits.)

**MUSIC CUE #4: "GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN"
VOCAL**

BOY. *(Singing:)*

GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN
LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY...

(SFX: A knock at the door.)

SCROOGE. What in heavens now?!

BOB CRATCHIT. Let me see about it...

(SFX: Door with bell opens.)

(BOB CRATCHIT opens door for BOY.)

BOY. *(Louder, continuing from above:)*

REMEMBER CHRIST OUR SAVIOR
WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY...

SCROOGE. *(Overlapping:)* Humbug! Off with you, boy! Go and haunt someone else!

BOY.

TO SAVE US ALL FROM SATAN'S POWER
WHEN WE WERE GONE ASTRAY...

(SFX: Door with bell slams.)

(SCROOGE shuts door on BOY.)

BOB CRATCHIT. *(Hesitant:)* Mr. Scrooge, sir...

SCROOGE. What is it, Cratchit?!

BOB CRATCHIT. It's near closing time, sir, and I wanted to ask—

SCROOGE. You wanted to ask about taking off all day tomorrow, I suppose.

BOB CRATCHIT. If quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE. It's not convenient, and it's not fair.

BOB CRATCHIT. It is only once a year.

SCROOGE. A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

BOB CRATCHIT. I will, sir, you can count on me.

SCROOGE. Good day.

BOB CRATCHIT. And to you, sir, a Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE. *(With a growl:)* Humbug!

MUSIC CUE #5: CRATCHIT THEME #1

LANA SHERWOOD. And, with that, the office was closed in a twinkling.

SALLY APPLEWHITE. Bob Cratchit went down a slide on Cornhill, twenty times, in honor of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play with his family at blindman's buff.

JAKE LAURENTS. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's book, went home to bed.

Scene 3. Scrooge's House

HARRY "JAZZBO" HAYWOOD. Scrooge's chambers had once belonged to his deceased partner, Marley. They were a gloomy suite of rooms where nobody lived but Scrooge.

LANA SHERWOOD. There was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door; Scrooge had seen it there each and every day.

SALLY APPLEWHITE. But when Scrooge put his key in the lock of the door, he saw in the knocker Marley's face. Its livid color made it horrible.