

(Nothing from CHRISTMAS YET TO COME.)

I know not how, but something tells me that our parting moment is at hand. Tell me...what man was that whom we saw lying dead?

(Sound Effect 16: Tolling bells, thunder, and wind.)

(The sounds grow louder as the scene goes on. The lights dim, and the CRATCHITS vanish. STANFIELD and FREDERICK cross down left on the first level, behind the trunk, and crouch behind it.)

A churchyard?

(CHRISTMAS YET TO COME points toward the trunk.)

Before I draw nearer, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of things that *will* be, or are they the shadows of things that *may* be, only?

(No answer. Another bell begins to chime.)

Spirit, hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I have been. Why show me this if I am beyond all hope?

(Sound Effect 17: A loud thunder clap.)

Good spirit, pity me!

(Sound Effect 18: Another loud thunder clap, as STANFIELD and FREDERICK lift the trunk up on end, to reveal, on its bottom, a gravestone reading, "Ebenezer Scrooge RIP." SCROOGE falls to his knees in horror.)

No, Spirit, no!

(CHRISTMAS YET TO COME begins to back out up right.)

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. Tell me, Spirit, that I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

(He pulls the stone over; the trunk falls with a crash. He follows CHRISTMAS YET TO COME to the up right door and grabs it to beseech it - and comes away with an empty cloak. He wrestles in its folds and falls into bed as:)

(Sound Effect 19: Tower chimes tolling five.)

(He wrestles with the cloak in bed, as the stage grows brighter.)

I will live in the past, the present, and the future...the past, the present, and the future...the past, the present...

(A pause. He awakes. He takes a moment to realize he's back in his bedroom.)

I'm alive...

(Checking himself, to make sure.)

I'm alive...

(Taking in the room.)

...and this bed is my own. And this room is my own... And the time before me is my own. The Ghost spared me! I knew it!

(He jumps to his feet, opening the downstage window.)

I will live in the past, the present, and the future! The spirits of all three shall strive within me! Oh, Jacob Marley! Heaven and Christmas time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob...

(He's on his knees.)

...on my knees!

(He's up again, careening around the room.)

I don't know what to do! I'm 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!

(He wheels about, taking in the entire room.)

There's the saucepan that the gruel was in...there's the door by which the ghost of Jacob Marley entered...there's the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present sat! It's all right, it's all true, it all happened!

(He leaps onto the bed.)

A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world!

(He's off the bed again.)

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! Never mind, I don't care. I'd rather be a baby!

(Opening the upstage window.)

Hello! Whoop!

(Sound Effect 20: A cacophony of bells.)

Glorious! Glorious!

(CHARLEY enters as a boy walking down the street. He pauses, hurls a snowball at an offstage assailant, and does a somersault downstage.)

Hello there! Hello! What's today?

BOY. Eh?

SCROOGE. What's today, my fine fellow?

BOY. *(How could anyone not know?)* Today? Why, it's 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! Hello there, my fine fellow!

BOY. *(Trying to figure this strange bird out.)* Hello.

SCROOGE. Do you know the poulters, in the next street but one? The one at the corner?

BOY. I should hope I did.