

Side #1 - Ghost of Christmas Present

40.

SCENE 7: THE SECOND SPIRIT

The lights return and Scrooge is alone in his bed. He wakes himself up with a prodigiously tough snore and sits up. Was it all a dream?

Our narrators return.

FRED

Scrooge, determined to get his thoughts together, had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One.

CLARA

He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time and wondered which direction this new spectre would appear.

BOB CRATCHIT

I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him much.

ELIZABETH CRATCHIT

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means, prepared for... nothing.

Nothing.

Scrooge remains still, then restless. Maybe no ghost will appear after all.

The moment he gives up and hope returns for a restful sleep...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Start

Ebenezer Scrooge!

The lights come up in full -- but he is no longer in his bedroom. He is now in a lush and vibrant Christmas landscape;

with crisp holly leaves, red berries, wreaths, mistletoe, and ivy. A fire burns brightly in the hearth.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Come in! Come in and know me better, man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me!

SCROOGE

Conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. Tonight, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it. (aside - to himself) and let's get this over with...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Touch my robe.

SCROOGE

I warn you, I've grown proficient in flight.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Flight? We're here.

As Scrooge steps away from the SPIRIT, the COMPANY arrives. It is CHRISTMAS MORNING and the streets are bustling with activity and music.

SCROOGE

Spirit, what is this?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

This, my friend, is Christmas morning!

Scrooge watches in amazement. It has been so long since he has seen such uninhibited happiness.

ALL

~~GOOD KING WENCESLAS LOOKED OUT ON THE FEAST OF STEPHEN! WHEN THE SNOW LAY ROUND ABOUT DEEP AND CRISP AND EVEN! BRIGHTLY SHONE THE MOON THAT NIGHT, THOUGH THE FROST WAS CRUEL! WHEN A POORMAN CAME IN SIGHT GATHERING WINTER FUEL!~~

SCROOGE

Is it always like this?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Come.

They walk past WIDOW and BOY.

WIDOW

A penny, please sir.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Do you know this family?

SCROOGE

I- I do. Not by name, but by circumstance. She came to my doorstep just this evening seeking an extension on her mortgage. Her husband... recently passed...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

SCROOGE

Spirit...

End

A beautiful, melodic sound is heard.

SCROOGE

I would recognize that tune anywhere...

We are now in a small office belonging to FRED. He has opened the music box that once belonged to his mother.

He sings softly and sweetly -- just like his mother.

SCROOGE

I didn't know he still had it... he reminds me so much of his mother...

TINY TIM

Don't worry, Father.

Bob gives Tim a big kiss on the cheek. He hands the boy his crutch and the two exit hand in hand. We hear Tim coughing as he exits.

SCROOGE

Start

What is wrong with the boy?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Always a delicate creature, Tiny Tim. But he has a large heart.

The lights fill the stage and we are now in a tiny cottage.

ELIZABETH CRATCHIT is gazing with worry out the window.

PETER CRATCHIT turns the goose in the fire and BELINDA CRATCHIT is setting the table.

SCROOGE

Spirit, I wonder why you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

I?!

SCROOGE

Forgive me if I am wrong. It seems it has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

There are some upon this earth of yours who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all our kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.

End