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Family Plays

A two-act musical comedy that the whole family will enjoy—
an ideal Christmas present from your theatre to your community!

A Country Christmas Carol



Book by
Ken Nelson

Lyrics and music by
Ken Nelson and Jack Dyville

A Country Christmas Carol

“A fun-filled hoe-down adaptation.” (Metro Hotels Newsletter)

“The much-heralded production of *A Country Christmas Carol* came to the OnStage Theatre and played to a sellout crowd.” (Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

“The kids not only had a ball doing the show, but they also want us to make it a standard yearly production.” (The Dance Factory, Williston, N.D.)

“A delightful interpretation of the Charles Dickens’ classic.” (High-School Dinner Theatre, Bullard, Texas,)

“The hoe-down style musical comedy brings forth visual excitement galore in a fashion Dickens himself would have approved ... Due to standing-room-only crowds, an additional performance has been scheduled.” (Denise Morris, Mid-Cities Daily News)

A Country Christmas Carol is a two-act musical comedy that the whole family can enjoy—an ideal Christmas present from your theatre to your community!

Musical comedy. Book by Ken Nelson. Music and lyrics by Ken Nelson and Jack Dyville. *Cast: 11m., 7w., extras.* Scrooge has moved to the American West and changed his name from Ebenezer to G.R. (“Greedy and Rotten,” according to his victims). “Bah, humbug!” has become “Bull!” This musical relates the same message as the Dickens classic: Greed is bad, love is good, money is not what makes a person rich. Lovable characters—the angelic Cratchits; Sadie the Sodi-Pop Saloon owner; Belle, the heartthrob of a younger, happier Scrooge; Sister Sybil, a tambourine-totin’ evangelist, and others—all juicy roles for lively, vivacious performers. *Set: the Sodi-Pop Saloon and Scrooge’s adjoining office. Place: a small West Texas town. Time: circa 1883. Costumes: typical Western clothes. Appropriate for all ages. Approximate running time: 90 to 120 minutes. Music score available. Instrumental accompaniment CD available. Code: CM7*

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

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A Country Christmas Carol

A Country Christmas Carol



A Musical Comedy in Two Acts

By **KEN NELSON**

Lyrics by **JACK DYVILLE**
and **KEN NELSON**

Adapted from Charles Dickens'
A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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KEN NELSON and JACK DYVILLE

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(A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CAROL)

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“Produced by special arrangement with
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ABOUT THE PLAY

Scrooge has moved to Texas. And changed his first name from Ebenezer to G. R. (“Greedy and Rotten,” according to his victims). “Bah, humbug!” has become “Bull!”

But the musical adaptation relates the same message as the Dickens novel: greed is bad, love is good; money is not what makes a person rich. And when the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future show Scrooge the error of his ways, he gets the message.

Ken Nelson has peopled his play with a stage full of mostly lovable characters—the angelic Cratchits; Sadie the saloon-keeper; Belle, the once-upon-a-time heartthrob of a younger, happier Scrooge; the white-hatted nephew, the Sheriff; Sister Sybil, a tambourine-totin’ evangelist, and several others—all juicy roles for lively, vivacious performers.

A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CAROL is a play that the whole family will enjoy—an ideal Christmas present from your theatre to your community.

“A fun adaptation of Charles Dickens’ Yuletide Classic”—Linda Stallard Johnson, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*

“The hoe-down style musical comedy brings forth visual excitement galore in a fashion Dickens himself would have approved . . . Due to standing-room-only crowds, an additional performance has been scheduled.”—Denise Morris, *Mid-Cities Daily News*

“Although Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* for the income it would bring, he said afterward that he laughed and cried over it as he did no other story . . . the Heritage Players create both emotions.”—Barbara Chiarello, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*

“A big hit”—*The Citizen’s Journal*

Ken Nelson

A native of New Jersey and a graduate of Rutgers University, Ken Nelson has acted in numerous television shows, including *Dallas*, *The Jesse Owens Story*, *Celebrity*, and numerous “Crime Stoppers” specials and commercials. He is a popular night club singer in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.



A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CAROL

Cast of Characters

G. R. SCROOGE, rich baddie in a black hat
SADIE SASPARILLA, runs the Sodi-Pop Saloon
DIGGER, a prospector
SISTER SYBIL, an evangelist
BELLE, Scrooge's fiancée
SHERIFF, Scrooge's white hat nephew
BOB CRATCHIT, Scrooge's poor clerk
MRS. CRATCHIT, Bob's wife
TINY TIM, Cratchit's crippled son
NANCY, Cratchit's daughter
BOSS MARLEY, Scrooge's ex-employer, a ghost
SALLIE-MAE, Sadie's teen-aged daughter
THE SERGEANT, Sybil's assistant
SAM, piano player, fiddler
YOUNG MAN/BEGGAR-SCROOGE, seen in vignettes
BOY-NEPHEW, seen in vignettes
ACE DIABLO, flashy gambler, alias the devil
ANGEL, Diablo's doll, a dumb-blonde floozy
TOWNFOLK/DANCERS, 4 cowboys, 4 saloon girls, 4 children (or
more or less)

Setting: The Sodi-Pop Saloon and Scrooge's adjoining office—
in a small West Texas town, circa 1883



A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CAROL was first performed by the Heritage Players on the Fountain Stage of North Hills Mall, North Richland Hills, Texas, (a suburb of Fort Worth) December 4-20, 1981. Director: Jack Dyville. Musical director: Mark Menikos. Choreographer: Jan Champion. Technical director: Gary Park. Costume designer: Stephen Bishop. Scene designer: Mark Hull. Cast:

G. R. Scrooge	Ray Sampson	Nancy	Katy Orlowski
Sadie Sasparilla	Barbara Brown	Boss Marley	Bill Campbell
Digger	Barry Chester	Sallie-Mae	Linda Coleman
Sister Sybil	Cheryl Vaclavik	The Sergeant	Darin Wakeley
Belle	Barbara Rees	Sam	Mark Menikos
Sheriff	Ken Nelson	Beggar-Scrooge	Charlie Wetzel
Bob Cratchit	Hunter Smith	Boy-Nephew	Luke Adams
Mrs. Cratchit	Wallyne Reese	Ace Diablo	Travis Tyre
Tiny Tim	Randy Voorhies	Angel	Micki Holiday
Townfolk/Dancers	Jan Champion, Ann Handler, Kristi Voorhies, Alice O'Sullivan, Walt McFall, Walt Garrison, Travis Tyre, Michael Winchester		
Children	Craig Chalmers, Pete Clement, David Kiser, Heather Hester		

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

ACT I, Scene 1:

Christmas tree decorations—on stage near Christmas tree
 Long, rolled-up party list—Sallie-Mae
 White cowboy hat in box, Christmas wrapped—Sheriff
 Coin—on floor near steps to Scrooge's office

Scene 2:

Family photo—on Cratchit's desk
 Quill pen, ledger, big stack of book work—on Cratchit's desk
 Bags of money—Scrooge's desk
 Tambourines—Sister Sybil and Sergeant
 Playing cards (aces)—Diablo
 Beaded handbag with cosmetics—Angel

Scene 3:

One or two homemade crutches—Tim

Scene 4:

Cigar—Marley's ghost

ACT II, Scene 1:

Deputy Sheriff's badge—Digger
 Christmas present (white hat)—Young-Man Scrooge

Scene 2:

Feather boa—Sadie

Scene 3:

Tin cup—Beggar-Scrooge
 Coin—in Tim's pocket

Scene 4:

Burlap sack full of Christmas packages—Scrooge
 Money—Scrooge

Costumes

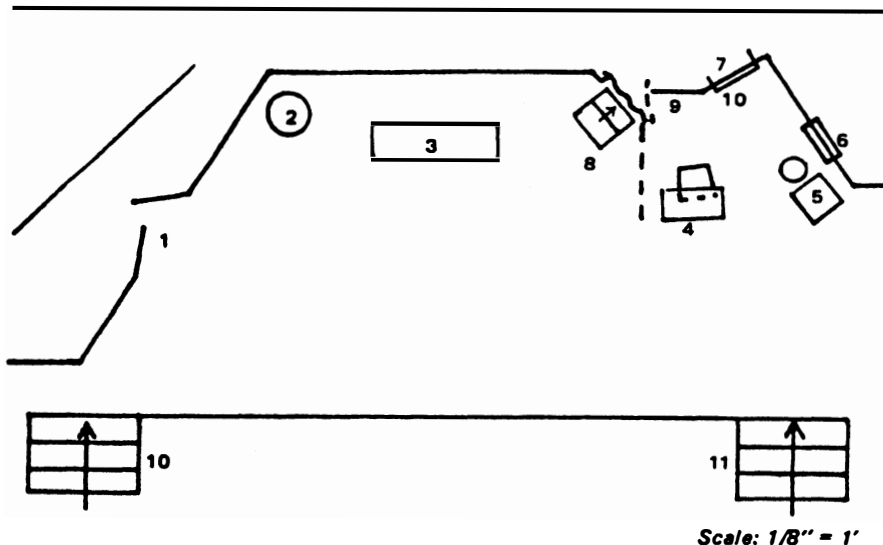
Everybody is dressed in typical Western costumes—cowboy hats, boots, long-sleeved shirts, and khaki or denim trousers for the men. Plain or fancy blouses, fringed knee-length skirts, or floor-length dresses for the women. The **Sheriff** may wear an all-white outfit, and **Scrooge** all black (including a black nightshirt in Act II). A red cowboy hat would be symbolic for **Diablo**. A sexy dress with abundant jewelry would be appropriate for **Angel**. **Sadie** and **Sam** may wear typical Wild West saloon costumes, and the **Cratchit family's** clothing may be replete with large, colorful patches. **Sister Sybil** and the **Sergeant** would probably wear Salvation Army-type costumes. **Digger's** prospector's costume may include heavy boots and wide suspenders.

Lights and Sound

The original production used a single set, with the saloon occupying most of the stage, with a small area at Stage Left for Scrooge's office (see floor plan, next page). Areas not used were blacked out. Steps leading from the stage to the auditorium floor at Stage Right and Stage Left were used for special scenes, including the Cratchit home in Act II, Scene 5. Spotlights illuminated the steps for these scenes.

The only sound effects called for in the script are the clock's chimes.

The Set
Floor Plan



- 1—Swinging saloon doors
- 2—Christmas tree
- 3—Bar
- 4—Scrooge's desk and chair
- 5—Cratchit's desk and stool
- 6—Practical window
- 7—"Mirror" (through which ghosts enter)
- 8—Steps up to Scrooge's office (curtain over opening)
- 9—Door to Scrooge's "upstairs" office
- 10—Stage Right steps from auditorium floor to stage
- 11—Stage Left steps from auditorium floor to stage

Trim props: Christmas decorations on wall behind bar; bar glasses, bottles, etc.; framed mottoes on Scrooge's office wall ("Time Is Money"; "Waste Not, Want Not"); scribbled sign on front of Scrooge's desk: NO SALICITIN; clock (real or painted) on Scrooge's office wall.

Add additional trim and set props as desired.

A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CAROL

ACT I

Scene 1

[Sadie Sasparilla's Sodi-Pop Saloon. SADIE, SALLIE-MAE, and DIGGER are at piano with SAM. They are singing when CURTAIN opens. TOWNFOLK enter with "whoopees" through swinging doors]

Music No. 1: "WELCOME TA SADIE'S"

ALL. Welcome ta' Sadie's Sodi-Pop Saloon!

She's such a fine lady, an' she's always got some room.

It's service country-style (yee-hah!)

That'll make the trip worthwhile.

So y'all come ta Sadie's saloon!

SADIE. My name is Sadie, an' I run this here saloon.

It's right cool an' shady—even at high noon!

I'll serve ya with a smile

As ya pass the time a while

At my one an' only Sodi-Pop Saloon!

[ALL dance. SADIE continues singing:]

A Texas honky-tonk an' more

You'll find when you walk through the door.

'Bout Sadie's place I really have ta boast!

Miss Sadie'll treat ya mighty fine,

You'll never have ta wait in line,

An' I've got the greatest grub from coast ta coast!

Folks they come from near an' far

Ta Sadie Sasparilla's bar

Ta sample all my sodi-fountain treats.

It's worth the trip when you git there

'Cause Sadie's place is beyond compare.

So, set right down an' have yerself some eats!

ALL. Welcome ta Sadie's Sodi-Pop Saloon!

She's such a fine lady, an' she's always got some room.

It's service country-style (yee-hah!)

That'll make the trip worthwhile.

So y'all come ta Sadie's saloon!

SALLIE-MAE. There's barbecue an' the world's best grits.

Her chili makes ya smack yer lips.

We love her food, but that ain't half the fun.

Her customers are all first rate—

It's the perfect place ta congregate

Fer Sadie's doors are open sun ta sun!

DIGGER. Miss Sadie serves the finest fare.

Her armadiller steaks are rare.

Her biscuits are as lights as clouds above!

[*ALL: "Clouds above!"*]

An' when yer finished with yer meal,

You'll find the price a dang good deal,

Fer Sadie only asks ya pay with love.

[*ALL dance Hambone routine*]

ALL. Welcome ta Sadie's Sodi-Pop Saloon!

She's such a fine lady, an' she's always got some room.

It's service country-style (yee-hah!)

That'll make the trip worthwhile.

So y'all come ta Sadie's saloon!

[*STINGER: "Saloo—oo—oon! Ya-hoo!"*]

SADIE. [*To audience*] How-dy! Ever'body welcome ta the Sodi-Pop Saloon! Y'all make yerselves ta home now, y'hear? Set a spell. I'm jest so happy all my friends could be together fer Christmas Eve. [*Sighs*] It's such a warm feelin' . . .

DIGGER. [*Crossing to her*] Y'bet it's warm, Sadie Sasparilla. Ya fer-gittin' we're in Texas? Why, it's hot enough ta barbecue an armadiller out there on Main Street! Them's tasty li'l critters, y'know! [*TOWN-FOLK begin general merry-making; decorating sagebrush, tumbleweed, or cactus Christmas tree, etc.*]

SADIE. Oh hush, Digger! I'm talkin' 'bout a *heart-warmin'* feelin' . . . [*touching heart, facing front*] the kind that Christmas brings.

DIGGER. I had that feelin' once, Sadie—but I think it was yer chili what brot it on! Heh-heh!

SADIE. [*Shaking her finger at him*] Yer terrible! Now, c'mon ever'body, gather 'round. [*Motioning to all*] Sam's fixin' ta play a brand spankin' new Christmas song he wrote-up special fer us. He's such a talent! [*Pinches Sam's cheek*]

SAM. Garsh, Sadie. Y'make me blush!

DIGGER. [*Pinching his own cheek*] Ya like it, Sam—an' ya know it!

SADIE. [*Scolding*] Hush, now! [*Calling out*] Yoo-hoo! Sallie-Mae, darlin'! C'mon over an' join us, now! An' round up the others.

SALLIE-MAE. [*Crossing to her from behind bar*] Yes, ma'am!

SADIE. [*Full front*] Such a blessin', that girl. Never gives me a bit o' trouble. Don't know how I'd manage without her. [*To Sallie-Mae*] How's the party comin' 'long, daughter?

SALLIE-MAE. Oh, jest mighty fine—'most ever'thin' is set fer tomorrow's hoe-down, Momma! [*Shows long rolled list*]

DIGGER. It'll be a hum-dinger! We're gonna have a [*mime*] kneelappin', foot-stompin' ol' time—ain't we, gals?! An' a mess o' grub, too!

SALLIE-MAE. Y'bet, Digger! [*To group*] An' remember, y'all are invited!

DIGGER. Hot diggity! Come an' git it!

SALLIE-MAE. [*Pause, turning to Sadie*] An', Momma, I hear tell that Belle may be comin'. She's back in town fer Christmas, y'know.

SADIE. Gracious! No, I didn't. [*Reminiscing*] Why, I haven't seen hide nor hair o' Belle in over . . . well, goodness . . . it must be goin' on ten years . . .

SALLIE-MAE. We used ta call her "Christmas Belle"—remember, Momma? She sang so sweetly.

SADIE. Yes, yes . . . Belle's back. Hmmm . . . [*Thoughtful, with purpose*] What a lovely holiday surprise!

SALLIE-MAE. [*Excited*] Oh, I do hope she decides to stay in Texas.

SAM. Ever'body ready?

ALL. Yer dern tootin'!

[*SAM begins intro to Music No. 2 as saloon doors swing open. MUSIC stops as someone enters. ALL are startled, then relieved to see SHERIFF instead of Scrooge. He is carrying a large Christmas package. He tips his hat. MUSIC starts. "Howdy" ad-libs*]

SADIE. [*Crosses, catching her breath with a sigh of relief*] So glad yew could come, Sheriff. Yer jest in time ta hear the Christmas song Sam done wrote special fer us. [*SHERIFF nods approval*]

SALLIE-MAE. Howdy, Sheriff. [*Girlishly enamored*] Come stand under the mistletoe with me. [*Leads him away, arm-in-arm*]

SAM. Ever'body join in now, y'hear?

Music No. 2: "CHRISTMAS IN MY COUNTRY TOWN"

SADIE. It might not be much ta yer way o' thinkin',
It might not chase away yer frowns,

It might not be a magic kingdom,
But it's my country town!

SHERIFF & SALLIE-MAE. It might jest be a lot o' small town people.
They might not talk the way you do.
They might not be refined an' modern.
But it's jest what I choose!

ALL. What I choose—ta chase the blues—
Like Santa Claus I'll spread good news.
It cheers me up—won't let me down—
Spendin' Christmas in my country town!

SADIE. It might not twinkle with lights brightly gleamin'.
It might not have familiar sounds.

ALL. [*Rowdy*] But you'll welcome the peace an' the quiet
Here in our country town!

SHERIFF. It might look plain an' without much distinction.

SALLIE-MAE. The buildin's small, but livin' proof—

DIGGER. [*Spoken*] Full o' hist'ry that goes unspoken

ALL. Under each country roof.

[*Dance music interlude, if desired*]

SADIE. It might not be what you'd call seventh heaven.
But ta me it's Paradise found.

That's why I'm stickin' here an' a-livin'

ALL. In this my country town.

SHERIFF. It's full o' stone paths that lead ya ta no place,
A lake o' crystal myriad hues.

SALLIE-MAE. The tumbleweeds blow through the streets here,

ALL. But it's jest what I choose!—

What I choose—ta chase the blues—
Like Santa Claus I'll spread the news.
It cheers me up—won't let me down—
Spendin' Christmas in my country town!

[*After song, merry-making continues*]

SHERIFF. Miss Sallie-Mae, ya seen my Uncle G. R.? I brought him
this here Christmas present. Prob'ly the only one he'll git . . . me bein'
his only kin. [*Full front*] An' him bein' such a sorry so-an'-so.

SALLIE-MAE. No, Sheriff. Cain't say as I did.

SHERIFF. [*Pointing, crossing to Sadie*] Is he up ta his office, Sadie?

SADIE. No, Sheriff. I—I declare that G. R. Scrooge is the darndest,
orneryist varmint this side of the Pecos! He couldn't stand fer all this

joy an' cheer we're feelin', so he jest flew out'a here quicker'n a bat out'a he—. [*SALLIE-MAE taps her on the shoulder*] Oh, goodness me, I plum near fergot this here's a family establishment. Well, believe yew me, he was in a terrible hurry—a'hootin' an' a'hollerin' somethin' 'bout money ag'in. Prob'ly out collectin' rent—an' on Christmas Eve! It's shameful an' unseemly, that's what 'tis. Ought'a be ag'inst the law! [*She begins to nudge Sallie-Mae towards Sheriff as he speaks, comical match-making*]

SHERIFF. Now, now—I know my Uncle G. R.'s fussin' an' feudin' gits yer dander up, ma'am, but don't go bad-mouthin' him. An' don't git yerself all fired-up over it. Shucks, he's jest flat confused. It's that dang gold what done it. All he sees is the glitter! [*Pause*] He used ta be so diff'rent . . . so happy. Ever since Boss Marley died an' left him the bidness, he's changed! [*Full front*] Y'know, Scrooge may be rich as far as money goes, but he's downright *poor* in spirit. [*Pause*] Well, I reckon I'd best leave the gift here . . . under the tree . . . [*Carries package to tree; SADIE and SALLIE-MAE follow excitedly. More greetings*]

[Saloon doors swing open violently, all stop and look. SCROOGE enters]

SCROOGE. Bull! What's all the ruckus? Why, y'all are crazier'n a pack o' love-sick pole cats. [*To Digger*] An' yew smell even worse! [*DIGGER ad-libs a sniff*] I'm headin' on up ta my office, an' I don't wanna hear a sound! After all, I own this place. Hmm . . . [*Bends over and picks up a coin, shakes it at Sadie*] "A penny saved . . ." That reminds me, Sadie, yer mortgage payment's two days past due! No more extensions! Quit yer dawdlin' or I'll foreclose an' you'll be out on yer bustle! Int'rest rates go up ag'in tomorrow. Bull! [*SCROOGE crosses towards office. SADIE follows him and stops. CROWD filters out, except for SHERIFF and SALLIE-MAE*]

SADIE. [*Hands on hips*] Oh, G. R.! I'm certain yer initials must stand fer *Greedy* an' *Rotten*! [*Pause*] C'mon, Sallie-Mae. There's work ta do.

SHERIFF. Miss Sadie, I—I hate ta admit it, but I reckon I'm hopin' ag'inst hope that my Uncle G. R. will ever change. [*SADIE and SALLIE-MAE exit down Stage Right steps*]

Music No. 3: "RICH MAN, POOR MAN"

SHERIFF. [*Spoken intro*] Rich man, poor man—which are you?

Feelin' happy, feelin' blue . . .

[*Sings*] My poor old rich old uncle

Has a bad case of the blues.

He's never had a friend to love—an' that's why he's such a Scrooge.
 His gold could make him happy if only he would share.
 For what good is gold when he's grown old
 An' has no one who cares?

I may not have much money,
 I haven't any gold.
 I may not own a fancy spread—these make you rich, I'm told.
 But I have lots of friends, y'know.
 I'm blessed from up above.
 For what I've got just cain't be bought—
 I'm a wealthy man in love.

I'm rich in love, I've the stars above
 An' I'm feelin' so complete.
 I'm doin' fine, the world is mine,
 My life just cain't be beat!
 I'm rich, you see, in company—
 An' this I will repeat—
 I'm doin' **fine**, the world is mine,
 My life just cain't be beat!

[Interlude]

So, I just **keep on** hopin'
 That Scrooge **will** change for best,
 An' toss away **his** greediness—to join our Christmas fest.
 If only he **would** listen to all that's bein' said,
 He soon would **learn** that he could be
 A happy man **instead!**

I'm rich in love, **I've the** stars above
 An' I'm feelin' **so complete**.
 I'm doin' fine, **the world** is mine,
 My life just cain't **be beat!**
 I'm rich, you **see**, in company—
 An' this I will **repeat**—
 I'm doin' fine, **the world** is mine,
 My life just cain't **be beat!**
 My life just cain't **be beat!**

[SHERIFF exits Down Right]

Scene 2

[Scrooge's office, dingy and unbecoming a rich man. BOB CRATCHIT is doing book work at a messy, full desk. He gets up to open window]

BOB. *[Thinking aloud]* It's so hot. An' I'm plum tuckered out. *[Yawns]* Ah, but tomorrow I'll have a whole day off ta spend with my family. *[Picks up family photo and smiles]* Jest wish I could afford ta do better by them. All these years they've put up with my meager salary. *[Pause]* The young'ns love Christmas so . . . they've been countin' the weeks . . . the days. How do ya explain ta children that Santa may not leave a present in their boots this year? It's a cryin' shame. I s'pose we should be thankful we got each other . . . reckon that's our pot o' gold. *[Hesitates]* If only my Tiny Tim could be well, so's he could run an' play with the other children—like his sister, Nancy. *[Puts photo down, pause]* Back ta work, Bob Cratchit. Y'know how Mr. Scrooge feels 'bout daydreamin'. . . *[SCROOGE enters and closes window]*

SCROOGE. Daydreamin' ag'in, Cratchit? Wastin' time? Yer a thief! *[Bangs desk]* Stealin' all my money—that's what yer doin'. Time is money, Cratchit—that's what I always say. "Time is money!" *[Shaking his finger]* An' don't yew fergit it!

BOB. *[Quickly]* Yes'r. *[Pause]* But . . . Mr. Scrooge, sir, it's so hot in here—hard ta believe it's December 24! Cain't we have some fresh air? I can hardly breathe. Please open the wind'r.

SCROOGE. I don't want ya ta breathe, I want ya ta work! If yew value yer job, Cratchit, you'll say no more. Now, back ta the books! *[He sits and counts money aloud]*

[Enter SISTER SYBIL and SERGEANT, marching from saloon with tambourines]

SYBIL. *[Pious, but low key at first]* Good afternoon, Mr. Scrooge. How do ya do? *[Extends handshake]* I am Sister Sybil from the Sanctimonious Society fer Spreadin' Spirit an' Savin' Sinners' Souls, *[pause]* Incorporated.

SCROOGE. An' I'm a busy man! Now, what are y'all doin' here interruptin' my office? *[Pause]* Cratchit there's got work ta do!

SYBIL. *[Smiling]* The Sergeant an' I are missionaries, Scrooge. We've come ta educate yew on how ta spread joy an' cheer at Christmas, an' find true salvation! Halleluja!

SERGEANT. Halleluja!

SCROOGE. Bull! Yew don't fool me! Yer from the poorhouse, ain't ya? I know yer game. Yer lookin' fer a hand-out. Well, it won't work! [*Points to sign on desk*] Cain't ya read? No solicitors!

SERGEANT. [*Offended*] Pardon me, but Sister Sybil would never stoop ta solicitin' . . . sir. We prefer to call it . . .

SCROOGE. Beggin'! [*To Sybil*] Why, yer no more'n a Bible-totin' organ grinder . . . [*Turning to Sergeant*] An' yer her pet monkey! Where's yer leash?

SERGEANT. [*Sighs, perturbed; aside*] It is written "... fergive thine enemies . . ."

SYBIL. Mr. Scrooge, we at the Society are the protectors of the tired, the poor, the hungry . . .

SCROOGE. Yep! Jest like I said—beggars!

SYBIL. [*Evangelistic*] Pray, listen ta me, Scrooge—yer wrong! Yew must learn ta share. Resist the temptation ta worship gold! Beware—stray no more—or be a lost soul ferever. There's a dark cloud o' sin hangin' heavy over ya, G. R. Scrooge. An' the Good Book says that the Light will only shine upon those who *give* from the heart. [*Pause*] Halleluja!

SERGEANT. Halleluja!

SCROOGE. Give from the heart? What do y'all want? Blood? Heh-heh! Practice what ya preach, Sister. Don't y'know that money is the root o' all evil?

SYBIL. All the more reason fer ya ta shame that ol' Devil an' put it ta a *good* use, Scrooge. [*Energetic*] By doin' so, you'll redeem yerself—an' feel the burden *fly* off o' yer shoulders. [*Pause*] Halleluja!

SERGEANT. Halleluja! [*Very commercial*] All this well-bein' can be yers, Scrooge, jest by makin' a substantial, tax-deductible monetary contribution ta the Society . . . [*He kneels, holding out tambourine for a donation*]

SCROOGE. Will a contribution guarantee me reserved seatin' inside the Pearly Gates come Judgement Day—an' no standin' in line?

SERGEANT. No guarantees, Scrooge . . . but it does *feel* better ta give, than ta receive.

SCROOGE. Bull! I feel lousy, an' that's jest dandy! Quit yer jawin', now, an' skee-daddle! Both o' ya! Out! Yer gittin' nothin' out'a me! [*Mumbles*] Ya greedy li'l beggars . . . [*SYBIL and SERGEANT exit marching. SCROOGE returns to counting*]

[*Enter SHERIFF and SADIE with package, crossing from saloon*]

SHERIFF. Merry Christmas, Uncle G. R.!

SADIE & SHERIFF. [*Together*] Merry Christmas, Mr. Cratchit!

BOB. Merry Christmas, Sadie . . . Sheriff . . .

SCROOGE. Bull! [*Mocking*] “Merry Christmas. . . Merry Christmas!”
What right have y’all ta be merry? Yer poor enough!

SHERIFF. Well, fer that matter, what right have *yew* ta be bitter, Uncle? Yer rich enough. Ya ought’a start inta countin’ yer blessin’s ’stead o’ yer gold! Ya got no reason ta be so hateful!

SADIE. Mr. Scrooge, yer hopeless! Why, if I didn’t know better, I’d *swear* a Blue Norther’d set right down in this here office. [*Aside*] An’ goodness knows I’m not the swearin’ kind. [*To Scrooge*] Y’know, I was fixin’ ta give yew a big ol’ kiss fer Christmas. But sho’nuf now my lips’d freeze—yer such a *cold* man! I declare, the only thing cold ’bout winter in these parts is *yew*!

SCROOGE. Save yer puckers fer the county fair, hot lips! Ya might can charge a dollar a pop fer ’em there!

SADIE. Well, I never! [*Pause*] That’s . . .

SCROOGE. . . . “Creative financin’!” A way ta turn yer liabilities inta assets. Ought’a be someone blind ’r crazy enough ta pay!

SADIE. [*Hands on hips, sternly*] O-o-oh! Yew can jest kiss my *assets*! That’s what yew can do, G. R. Scrooge!

SHERIFF. I—I’ve a present fer ya, Uncle . . . if ya please. Merry Christmas . . . [*Starts to hand him package*]

SCROOGE. Bull! [*Motioning them to leave*] I’ve no time fer this display of emotion. Now, scat—both o’ ya! Git out’a here! Go on! Vamoose! [*SHERIFF hesitates, then sets package on desk and exits—hurt—back to saloon behind SADIE, and out saloon doors*]

BOB. Mr. Scrooge, sir . . . it’s pert near sundown. I was wond’rin’ if I might take some time ta . . .

SCROOGE. I’m givin’ ya a whole day off tomorrow— [*disgusted*] *with pay*! [*Aside*] Must be the fever come over me. [*To Bob*] Cain’t see why ya gotta leave early t’night. We’ve still a few hours o’ daylight left ta work—then ya can go! No use wastin’ the candles—save ’em fer a rainy day. “Waste not, want not . . .” I always say!

BOB. A rainy day? In West Texas, sir? It’s jest that I . . . [*Stands, suddenly courageous*] Well, I haven’t found a gift fer my wife yet, Mr. Scrooge, an’ I won’t have her take my excuses another Christmas. It ain’t proper! Empty dreams, empty promises, an’ empty gift boxes—that’s all she’s ever had, [*pause, gulp*] sir.

SCROOGE. Oh, off with ya! An’ hurry—’fore I change my mind!

[Pats chest] I'm havin' an attack o' heart. *Must* be the fever! Shoo . . . shoo! *[BOB hurriedly exits office; crosses to Center and sings]*

Music No. 4: "HOW CAN ONE MAN?"

BOB. How can one man so rich in life
 Be so poor in spirit—
 So void of laughter, love, and wife?
 How can one man think just of one man,
 And how can that man be just himself?

Oh, sir, please—if you'd believe—
 Life would be grand, you'd have no cares.
 But, sir, you're all filled with greed
 And selfishness and such despair.

Oh, sir, why on Christmas Eve
 Should you deny an hour of time
 For one like me and make my family's Christmas poor?—
 But, in our own special way, so rich . . . so fine.

[Spoken] Oh, sir . . .

How can one man so rich in life
 Be so poor in spirit—
 So void of laughter, love, and wife?
 How can one man think just of one man,
 And how can that man be just himself?
Oh, how can one man be so blind?

[ACE DIABLO, feigning dignity and concern, crosses to Bob from Stage Left. He is accompanied by ANGEL. He tips his hat and speaks. His speech is quick and to the point].

DIABLO. Howdy do, Mr. Cratchit! Couldn't help but ta overhear yer plight. Mighty sad situation . . .

BOB. What the devil?

DIABLO. Yer quick, Cratchit. Diablo's the name—an' gamblin's my game! *[Hands him a business/playing card]* Jest call me "Ace." I wager a man like you'd do jest 'bout any ol' thing ta give his kin a *real* Christmas, fer once.

BOB. *[Puzzled]* I would?

DIABLO. Sure ya would! Right, Angel?

ANGEL. *[Primping]* Sure, Ace!