

Scene 1 – Fan

FAN. Dear, dear brother. I have come to bring you home, dear brother! To bring you home, home, home!

SCROOGE. Home?

FAN. Yes! Home, for good and all. Home for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gentle to me one night when I was going to bed that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said "Yes, you should!". *(FAN grabs SCROOGE in a huge bear hug and dances him around the stage.)* And he sent me in a coach to bring you, and you are never to come back here. We're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world!

(FAN races offs. SCROOGE follows a few steps, then watches her go as the memory fades.)

Scene 2 – Gentlewoman #1

(Doorbells jingle As FRED exits and the GENTLEWOMEN flutter in, dressed in bonnets and capes. They are unrelentingly chipper, earnest and can charm money out of a stone. They should never give up their Christmas cheer until the moment SCROOGE throws them out.)

GENTLEWOMAN #1. *(ACTOR #4 with small pad of paper and pencil, checking off list.)* Scrooge and Marley's I believe. *(Crossing to Cratchit.)* Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE. Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.

GENTLEWOMAN #2. *(As they scurry over to SCROOGE)* We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

GENTLEWOMAN #1. At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, 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?

GENTLEWOMEN #1 & #2. *(In unison)* Plenty of prisons.

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

GENTLEWOMEN #2. They are.

GENTLEWOMAN #1. Still, I wish I could say...

GENTLEWOMEN #1 & #2. ...they were not.

SCROOGE. The Treadmill and the Poor Law?

GENTLEWOMEN #1 & #2. Both very busy sir.

SCROOGE. I'm glad to hear it.

GENTLEWOMAN #1. *(Lecturing him, but nicely.)* They scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude. A few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor

some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices.

GENTLEWOMAN #2. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE. Nothing!

GENTLEWOMAN #1. (*Still hoping.*) You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE. I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, ladies, 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 #1. But 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.