

Recalling Mr. Scrooge



Murray J. Rivette

Inspired by the classic tale by Charles Dickens

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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Rapid City, SD 57709

Recalling Mr. Scrooge

HOLIDAY COMEDY. Inspired by the classic tale by Charles Dickens. In this sequel to *Call Me Mr. Scrooge*, the four ghosts are back, but this time they have to convince Ebenezer Scrooge's grandson, Scrooge III, to get into the Christmas spirit. The Ghost of Jacob Marley hires Christmas carolers to serenade Scrooge III, but they keep interrupting the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, who have been busy dealing with their own personal issues. The Ghost of Christmas Past is still in therapy recovering from the "Ken and Barbie incident," the Ghost of Christmas Present still can't remember anything in the present, and the Ghost of Christmas Future has abandoned her malfunctioning crystal ball. Since Scrooge III doesn't believe in ghosts, the Ghost of Jacob Marley may have to resort to Plan B and call on the Easter Bunny (aka "The Closer") for help! Easy to stage.

Performance Time: Approximately 45-60 minutes.

For the craziest Christmas carol of all, check out *Call Me Mr. Scrooge* by Murray J. Rivette at BigDogPlays.com. Also available as a musical!



Charles Dickens, 1842

About the Story

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) wrote *A Christmas Carol* in just six weeks, and it has remained his most popular work. After suffering from hardship and poverty as a boy, Dickens sympathized with the plight of the poor and felt strongly that social reform was needed to eradicate social inequity. The Cratchit children are thought to correspond to Dickens' own children, and Tiny Tim is believed to be modeled after Dickens's son, Tiny Fred.

Characters

(3 M, 3 F, 6 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 3 M, 3 F, 5 flexible)

EBENEZER SCROOGE III: Ebenezer Scrooge's grandson; wears a black coat-tail jacket, black pants, black shoes and socks, an off-white shirt with a dark bowtie; pince-nez or Aviator glasses; male.

GEORGE ROBERT "BOB" CRATCHIT: Tim Cratchit's son; wears a brown coat-tail jacket, brown pants, brown shoes and socks, an off-white shirt with a dark tie, and glasses; male.

GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY: Former partner of Ebenezer Scrooge who visits Scrooge III; carries a long heavy chain; wears a tattered dark gray or black suit, shirt, and shoes; male.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Ghost who visits Scrooge III; tends to end up in therapy after recalling unhappy Christmas memories; wears an old granny dress and has her hair in a large bun with a large tortoise-shell comb in it; female.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Ghost who tries to remind Scrooge of the importance of Christmas but has memory issues and can't remember anything in the present; wears a dark coat, harlequin glasses with a chain, partially rolled down knee-high stockings, and gold platform shoes; her hair is in rollers and there is a kerchief on her head, female.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE: Ghost who has been taking death easy and just hanging out with friends; tries to show Scrooge III his future; wears a large bath towel and/or bathrobe, a shower cap, and flip flops; female.

EASTER BUNNY: Complains that Easter isn't as much fun as other holidays; wears street clothes; flexible.

CAROLER 1-4: Carolers hired to sing Christmas carols to get Scrooge III into the Christmas spirit; wear holiday-themed winter attire; flexible.

STAGE MANAGER: Marks time by banging a gong; wears a black shirt, pants and shoes; flexible.

EXTRAS (opt.): As additional Carolers.

NOTE: For flexible roles, change the script accordingly.

Options for Doubling

STAGE MANAGER/EASTER BUNNY (flexible)

Setting

Scrooge III's office, Christmas Eve.

Set

Scrooge III's office. Almost bare stage with two masking flats. There is a hook to hang George Cratchit's overcoat, muffler, gloves, and hat. On the floor is pair of galoshes. There is a stool and a small table or writing desk with a candle on it for George Cratchit. His desk is piled high with papers and there is a tablet computer on his desk.

Props

Overcoat, gloves, hat, muffler, and galoshes, for George Cratchit
Handkerchief
Tablet computer
Large quill pen
Piles of papers and pencils, for George Cratchit's desk
Candle
Music stand
Sheet music
Gong with mallet
Pocket watch
Handkerchief
Chains, for Ghost of Jacob Marley
Key to bathroom (comically large with a funny key chain)
Music books
Department store shopping bag
Sheet of paper
Rubber ducky, loofah, or swim rings, for Ghost of Christmas Future
Sheaf of papers
Metal cup with pencils

Special Effects

Sound of a flushing toilet
Lightning
Thunder

**“They know
when I’m lying
‘cause they can
see right through me.”**

—Ghost of Christmas Past

Recalling Mr. Scrooge

(AT RISE: Scrooge III's office, Christmas Eve. Almost bare stage with two masking flats. Hanging on a hook on one flat is George Cratchit's overcoat with gloves in a pocket, a hat, and a muffler. On the floor is a pair of galoshes. George Cratchit is at his desk, busy at work amid piles of paper. There is a tablet computer on his desk. Stage Manager enters, carrying a music stand, sheet music, a gong, and a mallet. The Stage Manager sets down the stand, places the sheet music on the stand, and hits the gong five times. Note: During the following, the Stage Manager puts the gong down, turns a page of sheet music, and picks up the gong again.)

CRATCHIT: *(Sadly.)* Oh dear, it's only five o'clock. It's Christmas Eve, and I'll never get out of here tonight. Darn, darn, darn! *(Stage Manager hits the gong one more time, picks up the gong, stand, and sheet music and exits.)* Oh, goody! It's six o'clock! My, how time flies when you're having fun! *(Looking up to heaven.)* Thank you, thank you, thank you! *(Arranges papers neatly in a pile, puts away his pencils, dusts his desk with a handkerchief, and crosses to his overcoat. He puts on his coat, galoshes, muffler, hat, and gloves and approaches the door. Sees audience. To audience.)* Oh, hold the phone! I'm sorry. I didn't realize you folks were here. Now, this may sound a bit familiar to some of you, but it's really all new to me. You see, I'm George Robert Cratchit. Some people call me by my middle name, Bob, but most folks call me George. And I'm not the same Bob Cratchit who had such a terrible time with Ebenezer Scrooge so many years ago. Nope. Bob Cratchit was my grandfather. I'm Tim Cratchit's son. And I'm working here because it's a family tradition. The big difference is that I'm working for Ebenezer Scrooge, the Third...old Ebenezer Scrooge's grandson! That's right! Old Ebby went off-track for a while, so to speak. Always muttering something about ghosts...claimed he was visited

by four ghosts. Ha! Ghosts! Can you believe it? Apparently, they didn't totally convince him to change his dislike of Christmas, and he didn't heed their advice at first. But he eventually changed his ways, met a nice girl from South Dakota, of all places, and settled down. She was a caretaker at Mt. Rushmore and her job was to pressure wash the faces of the four Presidents. Anyway, she and Ebby had a son, Ebenezer, Jr., and his son now runs the company. And that's where we are right now. I'm headed out to spend Christmas Eve with my family. Maybe we'll just go out to a restaurant so my wife, Suzan, won't have to cook tonight. She's not a very good cook, anyway, so I'm hoping she'll want to go out to [Applebee's] or someplace like that. *(Starts to exit, shouts.)* Goodnight, Cousin Ebenezer! It's Christmas Eve and I'm on my way home to my family. Have a very merry Christmas, sir! *[Or insert the name of another restaurant.]*

(Scrooge III rushes on.)

SCROOGE III: Hey, hey, hey! What's all this about Christmas? You know very well how I feel about Christmas! Like my granddaddy used to say, "It's a humbug!" Double "bah" and double "humbug," I say! And what the devil do you think you're doing...getting ready to leave at 6 p.m.? It's not a full day until 9 p.m., so you don't punch out for three more hours! Not 6 p.m., bro, 9 p.m.! This is the height of the catalog season, and we're still getting orders on D-Bay, so you ain't going nowhere, buster! And please...do *not* refer to me as your cousin. Let's keep our relationship on the Q.T., okay? From now on, call me Mister Scrooge.

CRATCHIT: *(Sighs.)* Okay, Cuz— *(Realizes.)* Sir! Mister Scrooge, sir! *(Starts to remove his gloves, muffler, etc.)*

SCROOGE III: Whatever made you think that we were running this business according to bankers' hours, eh?

(Cratchit hangs up his coat and muffler and sits at his desk.)

CRATCHIT: But, sir, it's only one day a year that I ask to leave early. I guess I was just being optimistic that you might have changed your mind about Christmas and the holiday season.

SCROOGE III: Oh, yeah, right! Changed my mind! Ha! Don't be ridiculous. My grandfather and I had many discussions on this subject, and even though he gave in and eventually changed his ways, it doesn't mean that I'm going to change mine.

CRATCHIT: No, no, of course not. But I can hope, sir.

SCROOGE III: Oh, stop your sniveling, Cratchit!

CRATCHIT: Sorry, sir. I can't help it. When I think of the holidays, I get very farklemt.

SCROOGE III: "Farklemt"? What's that?

CRATCHIT: It means, "all choked up." "Hard to talk."

SCROOGE III: Ah, thanks for clearing that up. Now, have you checked your [iPad] for any new orders? *[Or insert another brand of tablet computer.]*

(Cratchit picks up his tablet computer and looks at it.)

CRATCHIT: Nope. Nothing. Remember, this is Christmas Eve, and just because you refuse to recognize it, millions of people tend to celebrate it. All other offices are probably closed, and most people are home getting ready for the big day tomorrow.

SCROOGE III: The big day tomorrow? Huh! Well, I hate to admit it, but you're probably right. But...I want you to hang in there for a little while longer for any last-minute orders.

CRATCHIT: Oh, okay, but I am not happy.

SCROOGE III: Oh, no? Then which one are you? Doc, Grumpy, Sneezy, Bashful—?

CRATCHIT: Oh, come on! You know what I mean.

SCROOGE III: Yeah, yeah. Just puttin' you on, Georgie Boy.

CRATCHIT: Please, sir, don't call me that.

SCROOGE III: Oooh, sorry, Georgie!

CRATCHIT: Thank you.

SCROOGE III: You're welcome. Not! I guess you should go on home then, if you think that your family is more important than your work.

CRATCHIT: Well, I do kind of feel that way, sir.

SCROOGE III: Oh, really? Do they pay the bills? No! Your salary pays the bills. When you work, you get paid, and when you get paid, then you can pay your bills, get it?

CRATCHIT: Got it.

SCROOGE III: Good.

CRATCHIT: Listen, before I go, may I please have the key to the restroom just in case I get caught up in traffic?

SCROOGE III: Oh, of course. Here.

(Scrooge III gives Cratchit the bathroom key.)

CRATCHIT: Thanks. *(Exits.)*

SCROOGE III: *(To himself.)* These lousy holidays sure bring business to a standstill.

(Ghost of Jacob Marley enters, dragging his chains.)

MARLEY: *(In a ghostly voice.)* Ebenezer Scrooge. It is I, Marley, and I am here to... *(Normal voice.)* Hey, hey, hey. Hold the phone. What's going on here? This place looks very familiar. In fact, it looks a lot like my old office many years ago. So, what's all the ruckus about?

SCROOGE III: What ruckus? I was just telling Cratchit—
(Realizes.) Wait a minute! Did you say "Marley"?

MARLEY: Yes, I did.

SCROOGE III: Bob or Ziggy?

MARLEY: Neither one.

SCROOGE III: Okay, if you're not Bob or Ziggy, then who are you?

MARLEY: Who am I? Well, I was once Jacob Marley. Now I'm just a ghost of my former self.

(Sound of a toilet flushing.)

SCROOGE III: Oh, really? A ghost? *(Marley nods.)* How about that!

(Cratchit enters but doesn't see Marley.)

CRATCHIT: Who are you talking to, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE III: *(Points to Marley.)* Him...the ghost.

(Terrified, Cratchit jumps into Scrooge III's arms, or Cratchit can hide behind Scrooge III.)

CRATCHIT: *(Scared.)* Oh, no! Did you just say a guh...guh...guh...

SCROOGE III: No, I didn't just say, "a guh...guh...guh." I said, "a ghost."

CRATCHIT: You said, "a ghost"?! *(Indicating Marley.)* He's a ghost?!

MARLEY: That's right. I'm a ghost.

SCROOGE III: Oh, come on, now. Do you really expect me to believe that? There are no such things as ghosts.

(Scrooge III puts Cratchit down, or Cratchit emerges from behind Scrooge III.)

MARLEY: Oh, no? No ghosts? I beg to differ.

SCROOGE III: Yeah, right. Is this a prank of some kind? Are we being [Punk'd]? Is ["Candid Camera"] back on the air? *[Or insert other suitable TV shows.]*

MARLEY: No, no, no. No prank, no punk'd. And no reboot of ["Candid Camera"]. I got the word that someone here doesn't believe in Christmas, and I'm here to set things

straight. But why do I get the feeling that somehow I've been through this before?

SCROOGE III: I don't know what you've been through before, but that someone would be me. I don't believe in Christmas...just like my grandfather.

MARLEY: Your grandfather? Huh. What is going on here? Why is this happening to me again? I'm a very busy ghost, and I don't have time for all this nonsense. I thought we got this all straightened out when I was here before and I had this same situation with my old partner, Ebenezer—*(Realizes.)* Hey, wait a minute! You're not Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE III: Oh, yes, I most certainly am.

MARLEY: I knew Scrooge for many years when we were partners, and you ain't him!

SCROOGE III: Oh, you must mean my grandfather, Ebenezer.

MARLEY: He was your grandfather? Omigosh! How long have I been dead? You're my ex-partner's grandson?

SCROOGE III: Right on. I am Ebenezer Scrooge, the Third...the "I-I-I," in Roman numerals. Hey, then you must be Jake Marley.

MARLEY: *(Correcting.)* Jacob.

SCROOGE III: What?

MARLEY: *(Correcting.)* "Jacob." Not "Jake."

SCROOGE III: Okay, then, you're Jacob Marley...or what's left of him.

MARLEY: That's right, kid. I am Jacob Marley...in the flesh. Actually, in the ectoplasm.

SCROOGE III: How about that. Say, you sure are carrying a lot of chains there, Jacob.

MARLEY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I've been through all this with your Granddad Eb. Don't make me go through it again, please.

SCROOGE III: Okay, but I'm guessing that they're the chains you forged in life because of all your bad deeds. I remember my grandpa talking about you.

MARLEY: (*Annoyed.*) You had to bring up the chains again, huh? That's right, sonny boy, these are the chains I forged in life, and, yes, they are a drag. Never mind. Can we please change the subject?

SCROOGE III: Sure, if that's what you really want.

MARLEY: What I really want is to go back to where I was before I got the call to come here. I have a [Disney] cruise booked, and the tickets are non-refundable. I should have turned off my darn cell phone earlier. So, anyway, how's your grandpa, my old buddy, Ebenezer? [*Or insert the name of another cruise line.*]

SCROOGE III: Oh, your old buddy is doing fine. He's an octogenarian now.

MARLEY: Aha, so he doesn't eat meat?

SCROOGE III: Excuse me?

MARLEY: You just said he's an octogenarian?

SCROOGE III: What does that have to do with him not eating meat?

MARLEY: Those guys don't eat meat, right?

SCROOGE III: I think you have the word confused with "vegetarian."

MARLEY: Huh?

SCROOGE III: A vegetarian is someone who doesn't eat meat. An octogenarian is someone in his or her eighties. Eighty years old, that is.

MARLEY: My bad. I guess I was wrong.

SCROOGE III: Yep.

(*Carolers 1-4 enter, singing "Deck the Halls."*)

CAROLERS 1-4: (*Sing.*)

"Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la!
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la—"

MARLEY: (*Shouts.*) Hold it! Hold it! (*Carolers stop singing.*)
Guys, this isn't the end of the play. You're not on yet! It's too early.

CAROLER 1: Too early?

MARLEY: Oh, yeah. Way too early. We gotta get a few ghosts in here so we can convince old Scroogie that Christmas is a good thing.

CAROLER 2: Oh, most definitely.

CAROLER 3: (*To Marley.*) That's important. Sorry.

CAROLER 4: (*To Marley.*) Yeah, we'll come back later.

MARLEY: Good, you do that. Thank you.

(*Singing, Carolers 1-4 start to exit.*)

CAROLERS 1-4: (*Sing.*)

"Deck the halls with boughs of holly,

Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la!

'Tis the season to be jolly,

Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la!" (*Exit.*)

CRATCHIT: (*To Marley.*) Excuse me, but what the heck is happening here?

MARLEY: Nothing. Just some Christmas carolers I hired to give my bit a little oomph, some pizzazz. (*Realizes.*) Oh, you must be Cratchit!

CRATCHIT: Yes, that's who I must be. Look, I heard what you said before, but who are you, really?

MARLEY: Like I said, I'm Jacob Marley.

CRATCHIT: The real Jacob Marley? Oh, right! You did say that you used to be my great-uncle's business partner. So what are you doing with yourself now?

MARLEY: Not a darn thing, really. Just kind of hanging around. I'm a ghost.

CRATCHIT: (*Skeptical.*) Yeah, right. There are no such things as ghosts. Didn't you say that before, Cousin... (*Realizes.*) ...er, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE III: I sure as shootin' did. *(To Marley.)* Anyway, how come so many chains?

MARLEY: I got into politics...bad decision. *(Indicating chains.)* These are to remind me of all my political misdeeds.

CRATCHIT: Oh, I would say it was a bad decision, but that doesn't explain why you're here, though.

MARLEY: I was sent here by the powers that be, hoping to knock some sense into old Ebenezer, here.

SCROOGE III: *(Insulted.)* Hey, I'm not so old. Okay, so tell me, Jake, do you have a plan to—?

MARLEY: *(Correcting.)* "Jacob," please.

SCROOGE III: Excuse me?

MARLEY: *(Correcting.)* "Jacob," not "Jake." I told you before...don't get me riled up.

SCROOGE III: Oh, well, excuse me, Jacob Not Jake, but do you have a plan?

MARLEY: Oh, yeah, I got a good plan.

SCROOGE III: What is it?

MARLEY: Well, a "plan" is "a detailed proposal on how to attain a specific goal."

SCROOGE III: Hey, I know what a plan is. What's yours for trying to set me straight about Christmas?

CRATCHIT: *(To Marley.)* I'd like to hear this one, too.

MARLEY: Look, it's in my job description that I am supposed to ensure that Scroogie, here, gets into the Christmas spirit.

CRATCHIT: And just how are you supposed to do that? I've been trying for the longest time to do it, but he's too darn stubborn.

SCROOGE III: *(Annoyed.)* Hey, hey, hey! I'm right here!

CRATCHIT: Sorry. *(To Marley.)* So, I ask again, how are you supposed to do that?

MARLEY: The last time I was here, I had three ghosts come to visit—

CRATCHIT: You mean more ghosts?

MARLEY: Right. I brought in the Ghosts of Christmas Present, Future and Past, but not necessarily in that order.

SCROOGE III: Is that your plan? Are you gonna send in more ghosts? You're here, and I can tell you honestly that one ghost is enough.

MARLEY: Nah, we've got to do it right. Three more ghosts will definitely be here.

CRATCHIT: Sounds like a hoot! Hey, do you guys play Bridge? Maybe we can get together a foursome for a game!

MARLEY: I don't think so. I don't play any card games at all, and we've got to take care of business. No time for dallying with games. I get enough of that at the home.

SCROOGE/CRATCHIT: "The home"?

MARLEY: Yeah, it's an assisted-care living facility for retired spirits.

SCROOGE III: Like [Jack Daniels] or [Jim Beam]? *[Or insert the name of other spirits.]*

MARLEY: No! Not spirits like that! The home is for old ghosts.

SCROOGE III: Wow!

CRATCHIT: *(To Marley.)* Wow, is right. What do you do there?

MARLEY: We mostly play bingo and Scrabble...all day and all night. Borrrr-ing!

CRATCHIT: Yeah, that doesn't sound too exciting.

MARLEY: Oh, it's not. But you should see what happens when you call "bingo" just one or two daubs before a blue-haired [yenta] gets to call "bingo"!

CRATCHIT: Bad, huh?

MARLEY: You have to fight them off tooth and nail. They get so angry.

SCROOGE III: How angry do they get?

MARLEY: They get angrier than a piano player in a marching band.

SCROOGE III: Really?

MARLEY: Believe me, in that bingo hall, anger is all the rage...and vice versa.

CRATCHIT: So, what's going to happen here?

MARLEY: Well, you're going to be visited by three more ghosts: the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Future.

SCROOGE III: Oh, okay. No problem

MARLEY: No problem? You don't think so?

SCROOGE III: Nope.

MARLEY: Well, let me tell you something: You don't want to get on their bad side. They can be mean...very mean. You've never met them... (*À la Elmer Fudd.*) ..."so be afwaid, Ebby. Be vewy, vewy afwaid." (*Normal voice.*) Maybe I'll send in the Easter Bunny, too.

CRATCHIT: What does the Easter Bunny have to do with Christmas?

MARLEY: Not one darn thing, but that's my plan B, my backup.

SCROOGE III: You know, Jacob, it doesn't sound as if you're very happy in that home. Why don't you just pack up and leave, go somewhere else?

MARLEY: Nah, too much trouble. I know I complain about it a lot, but it's not really that bad. We do get to see some great old movies.

CRATCHIT: Really? What's your favorite?

MARLEY: I'm very partial to ["Ghostbusters."] And there're lots of other good ones, too... (*Ticks off on fingers.*) ...["Beetlejuice,"] ["The Canterville Ghost,"] ["The Ghost and Mrs. Muir,"] and my all-time favorite, "Ghost." [*Or insert the titles of other ghost movies.*]

SCROOGE III: The one with Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze?

MARLEY: Yep. Whoopi Goldberg, too. Great movie. There's also "The Ghost Breakers."

CRATCHIT: Never heard of that one.

MARLEY: It's an old movie with a guy named Bob Hope. Got zombies in it, too. And we also have ["The Ghost and Mr. Chicken,"] ["The Ghost of Frankenstein"]—

SCROOGE III: Wow! That's a lot of ghost movies. Sounds like a repetitious theme.

MARLEY: Oh, you mean the ghost thing. There're more, but those are my favorites. We watch them over and over when we're not playing bingo or Scrabble. Oh, sometimes we also tell scary people stories.

SCROOGE III: Huh.

MARLEY: I gotta tell ya, I love Christmas, but my favorite holiday is Halloween. I get to go trick-or-treating.

CRATCHIT: What do you dress up as?

MARLEY: (*Gives Cratchit a funny look.*) What else? A ghost, of course!

CRATCHIT: Of course. Sorry I asked.

SCROOGE III: (*To Marley.*) So what else do you do to keep busy?

MARLEY: Well, I'm into astrology now. I've been looking up my roots.

CRATCHIT: That's great. What sign were you born under?

MARLEY: I think it was a [red neon] one. [*Or insert another sign.*]

SCROOGE III: Hey, listen, Jacob, I'm interested to know...you kind of appeared here out of the blue, so to speak. Did you just materialize or something like that?

MARLEY: Actually, no. I decided to fly in by commercial airline. Oh, and this airline still serves food. Can you believe that? The flight attendant asked if I wanted dinner. I asked, "What are my choices?" And she said, "Yes or no."

SCROOGE III: That doesn't sound too accommodating.

CRATCHIT: Sure doesn't.

MARLEY: Aw, that's okay. With super-saver tickets, it was cheap.

CRATCHIT: Oh, great. That's a plus.

SCROOGE III: (*To Marley.*) Cheap is good.

(*Lightning, thunder. Ghost of Christmas Past enters.*)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Phew! What a trip! Oh, hi, guys! Say, is one of you Ebenoozer Screege?

SCROOGE III: That's close, but the name's Scrooge...Eben-e-e-zer Scrooge.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Ah. So, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name—"

SCROOGE III: Hey! Cut it out with the Shakespeare! Who are you?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Oh, boy. Right to the point, huh? It just so happens that I am... *(Thinks.)* I am... *(Thinks.)* I am very forgetful. Darn! By the way, my name is Shirley.

MARLEY: I know who you are.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: You do?

MARLEY: Yes, I do. You're the Ghost of Christmas Past, and I'm the one who sent for you.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Oh, the one who sent for— *(Realizes.)* Aha! You're Jake Marley!

MARLEY: *(Correcting.)* "Jacob."

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Excuse me?

MARLEY: *(Correcting.)* "Jacob," not "Jake."

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Like I said before, "A rose by any other—"

MARLEY: *(Annoyed.)* Never mind! Just do what you're supposed to do and get out.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Well, that's not very hospitable. Listen, I left a great poker game, and I'm giving up my evening Pilates class to be here, so you might just try to be a little nicer.

MARLEY: I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: "Sorry" doesn't put the trashcan out at night.

MARLEY: What are you talking about?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Never mind. So, what is it I'm supposed to do?

SCROOGE III: I think you're supposed to try and get me to honor Christmas and that kind of stuff.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: (*Remembers.*) That's right, that's right. I remember now. Thanks for helping me out. I did that a long time ago for some older guy. I think he had the same name as you.

SCROOGE III: That must have been my grandfather. And it's okay. I understand what it means to be getting older.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Well, I must be getting real old, but not as old as one guy who was having lunch in our dining room last week. He was a former chess master and there was a checkered tablecloth. It took him almost an hour to pass me the salt and pepper. The next day, he was a couple of tables away from mine and he had to make two trips. And I think I told you my name is Shirley, right? Listen, Jake, I'm real sorry –

MARLEY: (*Correcting.*) "Jacob!"

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Oh, right! Sorry, Jacob. And I'm sorry that I missed ya last time. Why am I here again? (*Slight pause. Remembers.*) Oh, yeah. I told your granddad about how my Barbie doll walked away with Ken. Oh, listen to this: I saw them recently. They've each put on about 60 pounds! Ha! Anyway, why on Earth do I get asked to do these things? I had a rotten childhood, topped off by the "Ken and Barbie incident." I am not qualified to talk about past good Christmases, and yet here I am...basically hung out to dry. I had to come back to old Scrooge for therapy once a week, and then I had to go to a real therapist just to help me out of the misery he caused me. One time, I told Scrooge that I twisted my ankle and I really needed some support. Know what he got me? A cane! A candy cane! Lot of good that did! I will admit that it was delicious. But now my 401 (k) is depleted! How do I get back my retirement nest egg? How? I ask you, how?

CRATCHIT: But you really don't need it anymore.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: I don't need it?! I don't need it?! Give me just one good reason why I don't need it anymore.

CRATCHIT: Well, to begin with, you're already dead. So effectively, you're retired.

(Ghost of Christmas Past ponders this.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Okay, good reason. But I really didn't want to come here today. Like I said, I was right in the middle of a fantastic poker game when I got pulled away, and I was up a couple of bucks. I'm usually not too good at poker, but I had all the cards this time and things were really looking up.

MARLEY: But you still enjoy playing the game?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Oh, yeah. But like I said, I'm not very good at it.

MARLEY: How come?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: I can't bluff. They know when I'm lying 'cause they can see right through me.

MARLEY: Ah.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Yeah, there're drawbacks to being a ghost and trying to play poker.

CRATCHIT: Maybe you just need to try harder to keep a poker face...really concentrate.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: That's not so easy to do. I just can't help myself sometimes.

CRATCHIT: Try harder.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: I guess I could do that.

CRATCHIT: That's the spirit!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Ya know, even though my Christmas memories are not so good, I still think it's important for everyone to have that spirit to bring joy into their lives, don't ya think, Ebbie?

SCROOGE III: No.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Aw, come on. It's a lot better holiday than Thanksgiving.

SCROOGE III: Says who?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Sez me. And you can believe me 'cause I'm Irish!

SCROOGE III: Oh, really?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: *(Correcting.)* No, "O'Reilly."

SCROOGE III: Well, now you're being ridiculous. Why do you think Christmas is a better holiday than Thanksgiving?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: It's better 'cause you can get all the good food and treats that you get at Thanksgiving, and you also get presents.

SCROOGE III: Oh, come on, who cares about presents?

CRATCHIT/MARLEY: I do!

SCROOGE III: Oh, please. Do you guys really enjoy trying to make your way through thousands of Christmas shoppers in the hope of finding the one or two things that might please someone else?

CRATCHIT/MARLEY: Yes!

SCROOGE III: Well, I don't. I made the mistake of going out shopping during the Christmas season once, and I still have the bruises from all the pushing and the shoving, and the screaming and the yelling, and the little kiddies with their sticky fingers from licking candy canes and getting them all over my clothes. No, thank you! I prefer to stay at home and do all my shopping online.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: But that's all part of the holiday season. You get used to it after a while.

SCROOGE III: No, I can't, and I won't! You can have it, but count me out.

CRATCHIT/MARLEY: Awwwww.

SCROOGE III: Don't "awww" me. I hate Christmas, and I won't stand for it.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Why don't you at least give it one more shot?

SCROOGE III: Why should I?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: *(Hesitates.)* Well, maybe it might make you a better person.

SCROOGE III: I already am a better person than most persons.

CRATCHIT: Uh—
SCROOGE III: Quiet, Cratchit!
CRATCHIT: I'm sorry.
SCROOGE III: You certainly are.

(Singing "Joy to the World," Carolers 1-4 enter.)

CAROLERS 1-4: *(Sing.)*
"Joy to the World! The Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King—"
MARLEY: *(Shouts.)* Stop!
CAROLER 1: Still too early?
MARLEY: *Way* too early.
CAROLER 2: Not time yet?
MARLEY: Not yet.
CAROLER 3: We blew it again?
MARLEY: Just leave.
CAROLER 4: I feel so stupid...
MARLEY: *(Shouts.)* Go!

(Singing, Carolers 1-4 start to exit.)

CAROLERS 1-4: *(Sing.)*
"Joy to the World! The Lord is come;
Let Earth receive her King—" *(Exit.)*
MARLEY: I'm beginning to wonder if I made the right
decision hiring them.

[END OF FREEVIEW]