

Continue

Christmas carol stave 3 answers

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Scrooge wakes in mid-snore and realizes without surprise that the hour is approaching one o'clock. But at the stroke of the hour nothing happens, and Scrooge uncertainly lies in his bed awaiting the second ghost. Scrooge follows a stream of light from the next room and finds a giant surrounded by a feast of Christmas foods filling the room. The
Ghost of Christmas Present is pleasant and young. He carries a torch shaped like a Cornucopia, and the ghost has an aura of good cheer and kindness about him. Scrooge is ready to see what the ghost has come to show him, so they take off. First the Ghost of Christmas Present is pleasant and young. He carries a torch shaped like a Cornucopia, and the ghost has come to show him, so they take off. First the Ghost of Christmas Present is pleasant and young. He carries a torch shaped like a Cornucopia, and the ghost has come to show him, so they take off.
morning. As they watch the townspeople, the ghost sprinkles good cheer on them from his cornucopia to assure that the spirit of the holiday reaches everyone. Then the ghost takes Scrooge to Bob Cratchit's house. Inside the small house Cratchit's wife and several children are joyfully preparing their meager Christmas feast. When Bob appears, he
carries a small boy on his shoulders and the boy holds a crutch in his hand. Bob tells his wife that on the way home from church that morning, Tim said that, "he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day who made lame beggars walk and blind men see."
Stave 3, pg. 94. Bob, with tears in his eyes, insists that Tim is growing stronger every day, but his tears seem to suggest otherwise. As the family enjoys their small feast, Bob wishes them all a merry Christmas, and Tiny Tim echoes with, "'God bless us, every one!'" Stave 3, pg. 96 Then Bob proposes a toast in honor of his employer, Mr. Scrooge. Mrs.
Cratchit raises quite a stir at such a preposterous toast, but because it is Christmas and her husband wishes her to do so, she drinks to Scrooge's health although she believes him a stingy, cold, and selfish man. Scrooge questions the ghost about whether or not Tiny Tim will live, and the ghost foretells of a vacant seat in the chimney corner where
Tim's little stool rests and a crutch leaning against the wall there. When Scrooge protests sadly, the ghost answers with Scrooge that in the sight of God,
Scrooge himself may be more fit to die, more readily considered part of the "surplus population," than young Tim. As Tim sings a Christmas Carol, Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present make together is at the home of Scrooge's nephew where a
Christmas party is underway. Fred and his young wife are hosting the party and they are talking with their guests about Scrooge is a hard, mean, old miser, Fred pities him because his money does not make him happy. Fred insists that although Scrooge might turn him down, he
will return to his uncle's office each year. He will invite Scrooge to enjoy Christmas with his family because he hopes that it will at least put enough good cheer into the old man that he might give his poor clerk, Bob Cratchit, a Christmas bonus. The guests laugh at the idea and then move on to playing party games. Scrooge, forgetting that he is not
there in person, plays along with them from his corner of the room beside the spirit. In one of their games, Fred guilelessly makes fun of his uncle and then toasts him because he has been such a source of entertainment for the evening. Scrooge is so caught up in the excitement and fun of the party that he almost talks back to the guests as if they can
hear him, but the Ghost of Christmas Present takes him away from the party. Topic Tracking: Charity 6Topic Tracking: Char
protruding from the ghost's robe. When Scrooge asks what is happening, the ghost explains that his life on earth is but twenty-four hours long and his time is almost over. Then he opens his robe to reveal to Scrooge two hideous and monstrous children that cling to the ghost's robe. He explains that the girl child is Want and the boy, Ignorance, and
that they are the children of mankind. He warns Scrooge that he should beware them both, but Ignorance most of all, or else doom is imminent. Scrooge asks if these wretches have somewhere to go, some place to seek refuge, and the ghost's final words are a repetition of Scrooge's earlier mocking questions of whether or not there are workhouses or
prisons for the poor. The clock strikes midnight and the giant Ghost of Christmas Present disappears. Topic Tracking: Greed 6 Scrooge looks around and sees a hooded phantom approaching him. The embedded audio player requires a modern internet browser. You should visit Browse Happy and update your internet browser
today! The Second of the Three Spirits Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with
the second messenger dispatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention. But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands, and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For, he wished to
challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous. Gentlemen of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and being usually equal to the time-of-day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for
anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, 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 very much. Now, being prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay
upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case
of spontaneous combustion, without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think - as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too - at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret
of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door. The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed. It was his own room. There
was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such
a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrifaction of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-
puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see:, who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it
up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door. "Come in!" exclaimed the Ghost. "Come in, and know me better, man." Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them. "I am the Ghost
of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me." Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the
garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword
was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust. "You have never seen the like of me before!" exclaimed the Spirit. "Never," Scrooge made answer to it. "Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?" pursued the Phantom. "I don't think I have,"
said Scrooge. "I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?" "More than eighteen hundred," said the Ghost. "A tremendous family to provide for," muttered Scrooge submissively, "conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is
working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it." "Touch my robe." Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast. Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of
night, and they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses, whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the
road below, and splitting into artificial little snow upon the fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the ground; which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy wheels of carts and wagons; furrows that
crossed and recrossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off, and made intricate channels, hard to trace in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in shower of sooty atoms, as if all the
chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear hearts" content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain. For, the people who were
shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball - better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest - laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were
radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went
by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers" benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their
fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The
very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement. The Grocers'! Nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters
down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses. It was not alone that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the
raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in
modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, clashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running
back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humour possible; while the Grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at if they chose. But soon the
steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops. The sight of these poor revellers
appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other,
he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was. In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the
thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too. "Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked Scrooge. "To any kindly given. To a poor one most." "Why to a poor one most?"
asked Scrooge. "Because it needs it most." "Spirit," said Scrooge, after a moment's thought, "I wonder you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment." "I!" cried the Spirit. "You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day, often the only day on which
they can be said to dine at all," said Scrooge. "Youldn't you?" "I!" cried the Spirit. "You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day," said Scrooge. "And it comes to the same thing." "I seek!" exclaimed the Spirit. "You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day," said Scrooge. "There are some upon this
earth of yours," returned the Spirit, "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 kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us." Scrooge promised that he would; and they
went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which Scrooge had observed at the baker's), that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as it
was possible he could have done in any lofty hall. And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the
threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch. Think of that. Bob had but fifteen bob a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house. Then up rose Mrs Cratchit's
wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt
collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own;
and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled. "What has ever got your precious
father then?" said Mrs Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim; And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour." "Here's Martha, mother!" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!" "Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said
Mrs Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal. "We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother." "Well. Never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye."
"No, no. There's father coming," cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha, hide!" So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon
his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame. "Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round. "Not coming!" said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home
rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day?" Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper. "And how did
little Tim behave?" asked Mrs Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content. "As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the
church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see." Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty. His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came
Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs - as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby - compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and
the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession. Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course - and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs Cratchit made the gravy
(ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their
posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush
of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah! There never was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the
themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last. Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were steeped in sage and
onion to the eyebrows. But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs Cratchit left the room alone - too nervous to bear witnesses - to take the pudding up and bring it in. Suppose it should not be done enough? Suppose it should break in turning out? Suppose it should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they
were merry with the goose - a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid? All sorts of horrors were supposed. Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that.
That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs Cratchit entered - flushed, but smiling proudly - with the pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the
greatest success achieved by Mrs Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any
Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing. At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in
cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed: "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us." Which all the family re-echoed. "God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded
that he might be taken from him. "Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live." "I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die." "No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no,"
kind Spirit. Say he will be spared." "If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief
Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust." Scrooge bent before the Ghost's rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the founder of the Feast!" "The Founder of the Feast indeed!"
cried Mrs Cratchit, reddening. "I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," "It should be Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," "It should be Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it." "My dear," said Bob, "the children. Christmas Day," and "the
know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow." "My dear," was Bob's mild answer, "Christmas Day." "I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's," said Mrs Cratchit, "not for his. Long life to him. A merry Christmas and a happy new year! - he'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!" The children drank the toast
after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes. After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the
mere relief of Scrooge the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the fire from between hisself looked thoughtfully at the
collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long
rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord was much about as tall as Peter; at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you couldn't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went round and round; and by-and-bye
they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed. There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very
likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last. By this time it was getting dark, and snowing
pretty heavily; and as Scrooge and the Spirit went along the streets, the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlours, and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful. Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosy dinner, with hot plates baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out
cold and darkness. There all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at once, tripped
lightly off to some near neighbour's house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter - artful witches, well they knew it - in a glow. But, if you had judged from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give them welcome when they got there, instead of every house
expecting company, and piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings on it, how the Ghost exulted. How it bared its breadth of breast, and opened its capacious palm, and floated on, outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth on everything within its reach. The very lamplighter, who ran on before dotting the dusky street with
specks of light, and who was dressed to spend the evening somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed, though little kenned the lamplighter that he had any company but Christmas. And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though
it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed - or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower
lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night. "What place is this?" asked Scrooge. "A place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth," returned the Spirit. "But they know me. See." A light shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly they advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of mud and stone, they found a
cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children and their children and their children and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their children and their children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their children and their children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their children and their chi
been a very old song when he was a boy - and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigour sank again. The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade Scrooge hold his robe, and passing on above the moor, sped - whither. Not to sea? To sea
To Scrooge's horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, behind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering of water, as it rolled and roared, and raged among the dreadful caverns it had worn, and fiercely tried to undermine the earth. Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on
which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse. Great heaps of sea-weed clung to its base, and storm-birds - born of the wind one might suppose, as sea-weed of the water - rose and fell about it, like the waves they skimmed. But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the
loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their horny hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog; and one of them: the elder, too, with his face all damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old ship might be: struck up a
sturdy song that was like a Gale in itself. Again the Ghost sped on, above the black and heaving sea - on, on - until, being far away, as he told Scrooge, from any shore, they lighted on a ship. They stood beside the helmsman at the wheel, the look-out in the bow, the officers who had the watch; dark, ghostly figures in their several stations; but every
man among them hummed a Christmas tune, or had a Christmas thought, or spoke below his breath to his companion of some bygone Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging to it. And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year; and had shared to some
extent in its festivities; and had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him. It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as
profound as Death: it was a great surprise to Scrooge, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh. It was a much greater surprise to Scrooge to recognise it as his own nephew's and to find himself in a bright, dry, gleaming room, with the Spirit standing smiling by his side, and looking at that same nephew with approving affability. "Ha, ha!" laughed
Scrooge's nephew. "Ha, ha, ha!" If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge's nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance. It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, thereof
is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour. When Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily
"Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!" "He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!" cried Scrooge's nephew. "He believed it too." "More shame for him, Fred." said Scrooge's niece, indignantly. Bless those women; they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest. She was very pretty: exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital
face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed - as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory, too. Oh perfectly
satisfactory! "He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "that's the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offenses carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him." "I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece. "At least you always tell me so." "What of that, my dear?" said Scrooge's nephew.
"His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking - ha, ha! - that he is ever going to benefit us with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. "I have no patience with him," observed Scrooge's niece. Scrooge's niece's sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion. "Oh, I have,"
said Scrooge's nephew. "I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dinner," interrupted Scrooge's niece.
Everybody else said the same, and they must be allowed to have been competent judges, because I haven't great faith in these young housekeepers. What do you say, Topper?"
Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of Scrooge's niece's sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject. Whereat Scrooge's niece's sister - the plump one with the lace tucker: not the one with the roses - blushed. "Do go on, Fred," said Scrooge's niece, clapping her hands.
 "He never finishes what he begins to say. He is such a ridiculous fellow." Scrooge's nephew revelled in another laugh, and as it was impossible to keep the infection off; though the plump sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar; his example was unanimously followed. "I was only going to say," said Scrooge's nephew," that the consequence of
his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I
pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it - I defy him - if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you. If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that's something; and I think I shook him yesterday." It was their turn to laugh now at
the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously. After tea they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or Catch, I
can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge's niece played well upon the harp; and played among other tunes a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes), which had been familiar to the
child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him, came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for
his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton's spade that buried Jacob Marley. But they didn't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop. There was first a game at
blind-man's buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and Scrooge's nephew; and that the Ghost of Christmas Present knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human
nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she went, there went he. He always knew where the plump sister was. He wouldn't catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him (as some of them did), on purpose, he would have made a feint of
endeavouring to seize you, which would have been an affront to your understanding, and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of the plump sister. She often cried out that it wasn't fair; and it really was not. But when at last, he caught her; when, in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner
whence there was no escape; then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was necessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck; was vile, monstrous. No doubt she told him her opinion of
it, when, another blind-man being in office, they were so very confidential together, behind the curtains. Scrooge's niece was not one of the blind-man's buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to
admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and to the secret joy of Scrooge's nephew, beat her sisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge, for, wholly
forgetting the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed quite right, too; for the sharpest needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye, was not sharper than Scrooge; blunt as he took it in his head to be. The Ghost was greatly
pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done. "Here's a new game," said Scrooge. "One half hour, Spirit, only one." It was a Game called Yes and No, where Scrooge's nephew had to think of something, and the
rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, a l
and walked about the streets, and wasn't made a show of, and wasn't led by anybody, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was
so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out: "I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!" "What is it?" cried Fred. "It's your Uncle Scrooge!" Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the
reply to "Is it a bear?" ought to have been "Yes," inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from Mr Scrooge, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way. "He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure," said Fred, "and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine
ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, "'Uncle Scrooge!" they cried. "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is," said Scrooge!" Uncle Scrooge! "Uncle Scrooge! they cried. "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is," said Scrooge! "Uncle Scrooge! they cried. "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is," said Scrooge! "Uncle 
that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels. Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but
always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door
and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts. It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost
grew older, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey. "Are spirits' lives so short?" asked Scrooge. "My life upon this globe, is very brief," replied the Ghost. "It ends to-night."
"To-night!" cried Scrooge. "To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near." The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment. "Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask," said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, "but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a
foot or a claw?" "It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it," was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. "Look, look, down here!" exclaimed the Ghost
They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat
enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread. Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked
themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude. "Spirit, are they yours?" Scrooge could say no more. "They are Man's," said the Spirit, looking down upon them. "And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this
boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!" cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end." "Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge. "Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end." "Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge. "Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end." "Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge. "Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factions purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end." "Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge. "Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "Slander those who tell it ye. Admit it for your factions purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end." "Have they no refuge or resource?" cried Scrooge. "Are there no prisons?" said the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. "The stretching out its hand towards the city." "The stretching out
turning on him for the last time with his own words. "Are there no workhouses?" The bell struck twelve. Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the
ground, towards him. Page 2 The embedded audio player requires a modern internet browser. You should visit Browse Happy and update your internet browser today! The Last of the Spirits The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed
to scatter gloom and mystery. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded. He felt that it was tall and stately when
it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved. "I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" said Scrooge. The Spirit answered not, but pointed downward with its hand. "You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not
happened, but will happen in the time before us," Scrooge pursued. "Is that so, Spirit?" The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received. Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs
trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit pauses a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover. But Scrooge was all the worse for this. It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that behind the dusky shroud there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon
him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black. "Ghost of the Future!" he exclaimed, "I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company,
and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?" It gave him no reply. The hand was pointed straight before them. "Lead on," said Scrooge followed in the shadow of its dress, which bore
him up, he thought, and carried him along. They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked
at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth, as Scrooge had seen them often. The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, Scrooge advanced to listen to their talk. "No," said a great fat man with a monstrous chin," I don't know much about it, either way. I
only know he's dead." "When did he die?" inquired another. "Last night, I believe." "Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. "I thought he'd never die." "God knows," said the first, with a yawn. "What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous
excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock. "I haven't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again. "Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know." This pleasantry was received with a general laugh. "It's likely to be a very cheap funeral," said the same speaker; "for upon my life I
don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?" "I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one." Another laugh. "Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all," said the first speaker," for I never wear black gloves, and I
never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye." Speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups. Scrooge knew the men, and looked towards the Spirit for an explanation. The
Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. Scrooge listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here. He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were men of aye business: very wealthy, and of great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is;
strictly in a business point of view. "How are you?" said one. "How are you?" returned the second. "Cold, isn't it." "Seasonable for Christmas time. You're not a skater, I suppose?" "No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning." Not another word.
That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting. Scrooge was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have any
bearing on the death of Jacob, his old partner, for that was Past, and this Ghost's province was the Future. Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every
word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clue he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy. He looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed
corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch. It gave him little surprise, however; for he had been revolving in his mind a change of life, and thought and hoped he saw his new-born resolutions carried out in this. Quiet and dark,
beside him stood the Phantom, with its outstretched hand. When he roused himself from his thoughtful quest, he fancied from the turn of the hand, and its situation in reference to himself, that the Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and feel very cold. They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town,
where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offenses of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the
whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery. Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds.
Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frowsy
curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement. Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man
in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh. "Let the charwoman alone to be the first!" cried she who had entered first. "Let the laundress alone to be
the second; and let the undertaker's man alone to be the third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance. If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!" "You couldn't have met in a better place," said old Joe, removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come into the parlour. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two an't strangers. Stop
till I shut the door of the shop. Ah. How it skreeks. There an't such a rusty bit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; and I'm sure there's no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, ha! We're all suitable to our calling, we're well matched. Come into the parlour." The parlour was the space behind the screen of rags. The old
man raked the fire together with an old stair-rod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night), with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again. While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor, and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold
defiance at the other two. "What odds then. What odds, Mrs Dilber." said the woman. "Every person has a right to take care of themselves. He always did." "That's true, indeed," said the woman; who's the wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I
suppose?" "No, indeed," said Mrs Dilber and the man together. "We should hope not." "Very well, then!" cried the woman. "That's enough. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose." "No, indeed," said Mrs Dilber, laughing. "If he wanted to keep them after he was dead, a wicked old screw," pursued the
woman, "why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself." "It's the truest word that ever was spoke," said Mrs Dilber. "It's a judgment on him." "I wish it was a little heavier judgment," replied the woman; "and it
should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We know pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe." But the
gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, produced his plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. They were severally examined and appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was disposed to give for each
upon the wall, and added them up into a total when he found there was nothing more to come. "That's your account," said Joe, "and I wouldn't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?" Mrs Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing appearel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few
boots. Her account was stated on the wall in the same manner. "I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself," said old Joe. "That's your account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown." "And now undo my bundle, Joe," said
the first woman. Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff. "What do you call this?" said Joe. "Bed-curtains?" "Ah!" returned the woman, laughing and leaning forward on her crossed arms. "Bed-curtains." "You don't mean to
say you took them down, rings and all, with him lying there?" said Joe. "Yes I do," replied the woman. "Why not?" "You were born to make your fortune," said Joe," and you'll certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as he was, I promise you, Joe," returned the woman
coolly. "Don't drop that oil upon the blankets," asked Joe. "Whose else's do you think?" replied the woman. "He isn't likely to take cold without them, I dare say." "I hope he didn't die of any thing catching. Eh?" said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up. "Don't you be afraid of that," returned the woman. "I an't so fond of
his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah. you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me." "What do you call wasting of it?" asked old Joe. "Putting it on him to be buried in, to be
sure," replied the woman with a laugh. "Somebody was fool enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for such a pu
scanty light afforded by the old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust, which could hardly have been greater, though they demons, marketing the corpse itself. "Ha, ha!" laughed the same woman, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it, told out their several gains upon the ground. "This is the end of it, you see. He
frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead. Ha, ha, ha!" "Spirit," said Scrooge, shuddering from head to foot. "I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven, what is this?" He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost
touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language. The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language. The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.
was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man. Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Scrooge's part,
would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side. Oh cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion. But of the loved,
revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand was open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike. And
see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal! No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts. Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares. They have brought him to a rich end,
truly. He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. What they wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and
disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think. "Spirit,." he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go." Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the power, Spirit. I have not the power." Again it seemed to look
upon him. "If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said Scrooge quite agonised, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you." The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were. She was expecting
some one, and with anxious eagerness; for she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play. At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a
man whose face was careworn and depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and when she asked him faintly what news (which was not until after a long
silence), he appeared embarrassed how to answer. "Is it good." she said, "or bad?" - to help him. "Bad," he answered. "We are quite ruined." "He is past relenting," said her husband. "He is dead." She was a mild and
patient creature if her face spoke truth; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she said so, with clasped hands. She prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion of her heart. "What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay; and
what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then." "To whom will our debt be transferred?" "I don't know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We
may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline." Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The children's faces hushed, and clustered round to hear what they so little understood, were brighter; and it was a happier house for this man's death. The only emotion that the Ghost could show him, caused by the event, was one of pleasure. "Let
me see some tenderness connected with a death," said Scrooge; "or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be for ever present to me." The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob
Cratchit's house; the dwelling he had visited before; and found the mother and the children seated round the fire. Quiet. 'Yery quiet. The moisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet. "And he
took a child, and set him in the midst of them." Where had Scrooge heard those words? He had not dreamed them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on? The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face. "The colour hurts my eyes," she said. The colour? Ah, poor
Tiny Tim. "They're better now again," said Cratchit's wife. "It makes them weak by candle-light; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time." "Past it rather," Peter answered, shutting up his book. "But I think he's walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother."
They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once: "I have known him walk with - I have known him walk with 
her work, "and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble - no trouble. And there is your father at the door!" She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter - he had need of it, poor fellow - came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees
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and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, "Don't mind it, father. Don't be grieved." Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said. "Sunday. You went to-day, then, Robert?" said his wife. "Yes, my dear," returned Bob. "I wish you could have gone. It would walk there on a Sunday. My little child!" cried Bob. "My little child!" He broke down all at once. He couldn't help it. If he could have

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