

Mrs.

Scrooge

**A new musical Inspired by “A Christmas Carol” by Charles
Dickens**

Book

By

Donald J. Leonard, Jr.

Music and Lyrics

By

David Reiser

MRS. SCROOGE
Copyright 2003
by Donald J. Leonard, Jr. and David Reiser
All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that MRS. SCROOGE is subject to a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign language are strictly reserved.

The amateur live stage performance rights to MRS. SCROOGE are controlled exclusively by Drama Source and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended and dates of production. Royalties are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Drama Source Co., 1588 E. 361 N., St. Anthony, Idaho 83445, unless other arrangements are made.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain, and whether or not admission is charged. For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to Drama Source Company, 1588 E. 361 N. St. Anthony, Idaho 83445.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced, the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play, "Produced by special arrangement with Drama Source Co."

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

No one shall commit or authorize any act or omission by which the copyright or the rights to copyright of this play may be impaired.

No one shall make changes in this play for the purpose of production without written permission.

Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised in their own interests to apply to Drama Source Company for written permission before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

Overture.....	Instrumental
Opening.....	Ensemble
Mrs. Scrooge.....	Urchins
Christmastime.....	Ensemble
There's A Lot to Be Thankful for.....	Mary Jane
Christmas.....	Eliza/Carolers
My Own Room.....	Mary Jane/Francine
Evening Prayer.....	Martin/Patricia/Brett/Ernest/Tammy
I'd Like to Get to Know You.....	William/Patricia
Mrs. Scrooge (Reprise).....	Urchins
Dry Your Eyes.....	Francine
Oh, Eliza, Dear/It's A Dream.....	Madeline/Eliza

ACT II

Entr' Acte.....	Instrumental
Eliza's Birth/Eldon's Birth/Boarding School.....	Carolers
Dance.....	Instrumental
Funeral March (I).....	Instrumental
Christmastime (Reprise).....	Carolers
Table Blessing.....	
.Martin/Francine/Patricia/Brett/Ernest/Tammy/William	
Go 'Way.....	Mary Jane
Funeral March (II).....	Instrumental
What'll ya Gimme.....	Mrs. Jenkins
A Brand-New Day.....	Eliza
Deck the Hall (Traditional).....	Carolers
There's A Lot to Be Thankful for.....	All those in scene four
Mrs. Tupper.....	Company
Bows.....	Instrumental

Cast of Characters:

Eliza Pendergast Tupper – A rich, miserly woman.

Francine O’Reilly – Mrs. Tupper’s over-worked employee.

Mary Jane Pendergast – Mrs. Tupper’s high-spirited niece.

Mr. Saunders/Christmas Past – A meek orphanage representative.

Madeline Whittier Pendergast – The ghost of Eliza’s mother.

Josiah Tupper/Christmas Present – Mrs. Tupper’s late husband.

Martin O’Reilly – Francine’s handicapped husband.

Patricia O’Reilly – Francine and Martin’s eldest child.

Brett O’Reilly – The eldest of the two boys, age twelve.

Ernest O’Reilly – The second of the two boys, age ten.

Tammy O’Reilly – The youngest O’Reilly child.

William Henderson – Patricia’s young male suitor.

Barbara Jenkins – Mrs. Tupper’s opinionated cook.

Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

Two Street Peddlers

Pawnbroker

Dr. VanderHausen

Judge Hawthorne Lake

Street Urchins

Vendors

Shoppers

Train Station Occupants

Salvation Army Carolers

Sidewalk Santa

Police Officer

Others

ACT I

Overture – down in one

(A montage/tableau of turn of the century New York is staged with the ENSEMBLE acting out the hustle and bustle of the weeks before Christmas. We see STREET PEDDLERS selling their wares to various SHOPPERS. A group of STREET URCHINS attempt to steal from a distracted VENDOR while a strolling POLICE OFFICER maintains the peace. A SIDEWALK SANTA competes with SALVATION ARMY CAROLERS as the overture comes to an end. There is a brief blackout. After the MAIN CURTAIN has opened, the lights come up on the re-grouped ensemble huddled in a mass center stage. They sing the following opening narration to the audience)

SONG: OPENING

ENSEMBLE: (Singing)

ONCE THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO,
DESPITE THAT SHE WAS WELL-TO-DO,
REFUSED TO SHARE HER WEALTH WITH THOSE IN NEED.
ELIZA TUPPER WAS HER NAME,
AND THROUGH THE YEARS HER NAME BECAME
SYNONYMOUS WITH BITTERNESS AND GREED.
SHE DIDN'T LIKE TO SPEND A DIME
ESPECIALLY AT CHRISTMAS TIME,
ALTHOUGH WE KNOW HER FORTUNE WAS HUGE.
SO FOLKS BEGAN COMPARING HER
TO CHARLES DICKENS' CHARACTER,
AND CALLED HER MRS. SCROOGE.

(The ENSEMBLE disperses revealing ELIZA PENDERGAST TUPPER, a crotchety woman in her early sixties, as she crosses from stage right to left and is flanked by the local STREET URCHINS.)

SONG: "MRS. SCROOGE"

STREET URCHINS: (Singing)

MISSUS SCROOGE, MISSUS SCROOGE,
PINCHES EV'RY PENNY.
SHE HAS GOT SUCH A LOT
AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY!

ELIZA: (To URCHINS) My NAME is Elizabeth Pendergast Tupper. You may address me only as ma'am. I don't see why you must call me that silly, peevish name. Such nonsense! Why don't you all go find employment in a factory or somewhere you can be of use to society! (SHE exits in a huff as STREET URCHINS react and LIGHTS fade to BLACKOUT).

SCENE I (in front of UPSTAGE-CURTAIN)

(The scene changes to the interior of ELIZA'S home, a Victorian-style house that is suggested by a few simple but elegant furnishings: a period coat rack, sofa, desk and chair, and lighting fixture. The housekeeper, FRANCINE O'REILLY, a harried and thin woman in

net late minutes, enters the room with a telegram for ELIZA.)

FRANCINE: Oh, Mrs. Tupper, this just came for you.

ELIZA: What is it, another bill?

FRANCINE: No ma'am, it's a telegram.

ELIZA: Well, don't just stand there. Read it to me.

FRANCINE: But it could be a personal matter that doesn't concern me, ma'am.

ELIZA: I highly doubt that, Francine. It's probably another of those solicitors asking for money. Go ahead and open it. I'm growing older by the minute!

FRANCINE: Well, if you insist, ma'am. (SHE reads) Mrs. Elizabeth Pendergast Tupper, Great Neck, New York. I regret to inform you that your brother Eldon T. Pendergast, and his wife Flora, were (shocked) killed in a train accident. Oh, dear God!

ELIZA: Is that all?

FRANCINE: No, there's more. (SHE Reads again) According to your brother's will, as the only living relative of their surviving daughter, ten-year-old Mary Jane Pendergast, you have been named as her legal guardian. The expenses for her upbringing shall be provided by the First Metropolitan Bank of Chicago. Your Niece will arrive this Sunday on the nine a.m. train at Grand Central Station. Sincerely, Irving J. Wentworth, Attorney at Law.

ELIZA: She can't stay here! We simply have to find a boarding school that will take her in.

FRANCINE: But Mrs. Tupper, It's almost Christmas. The schools will be closing for the holidays.

ELIZA: Whatever for?

FRANCINE: So the children can visit their families.

ELIZA: What if they haven't any family? Surely there must be someone who stays with the orphans.

FRANCINE: Please, Mrs. Tupper, think of the child. She has just lost both of her parents and you are her only living relative. She needs you after a terrible tragedy like this. It really isn't my business, but since you have such a spacious home I can't see why you couldn't invite her to stay here at least until after the holidays. By then a more suitable home could be found and she can start school at the beginning of the new term.

ELIZA: You are absolutely right, Francine. It IS none of your business! (SHE gives FRANCINE a nasty look). Oh, very well! I'll agree to keep her over the holidays. But since you're so interested in the child's welfare, YOU can pick her up Sunday morning. It's a good thing it's your day off! I certainly wouldn't want to pay you to walk to the train station and back.

FRANCINE: (Under her breath) I'm sure you wouldn't.

ELIZA: What was that?

FRANCINE. I sure wouldn't ... mind. We're usually in church at 9 o'clock, but I suppose we could go to a later mass.

ELIZA: You do that.

BLACKOUT – MID-CURTAIN CLOSES

SCENE II – GRAND CENTRAL TRAIN STATION PLATFORM

(The scene begins as we see a very large bustling group of ENSEMBLE MEMBERS singing “Christmastime”. The mood is similar to the opening of the show, where we see SOLDIERS on leave returning to their families and girlfriends for the holidays, GRANDPARENTS visiting their children and grandchildren. We see traveling NUNS, BUSINESSMEN, VENDORS, etc. The effect is similar to an old Norman Rockwell Saturday Evening Post Christmas cover.)

SONG: “CHRISTMASTIME”

ENSEMBLE:

CHRISTMASTIME, CHRISTMASTIME,
A WONDERFUL TIME OF YEAR.
WHEN OUR CHILDREN DISPLAY
THEIR MOST PROPER BEHAVIOUR
'CAUSE SANTA CLAUS SOON WILL BE HERE.
OLDER ONES HAVE BEGUN
A CUSTOM THEY JUST CAN'T RESIST.
THEY FOUND OUT THAT WHEN THEY GO
UNDER THE MISTLETOE
THEY CAN EXPECT TO BE KISSED!
ALL OVER THE TOWN
DECORATIONS ABOUND
AND THE SNOW COVERS MOST OF THE GRIME
AT CHRISTMASTIME!
CHRISTMASTIME, CHRISTMASTIME,
WHEN ALL OF THE WORLD IS AGLOW,
RECALLING THE NIGHT
WHEN A STAR SHOWN SO BRIGHT
ON A STABLE A LONG TIME AGO.
CHOIRS SING, CAROLS BRING
A WARMTH TO THE COLD WINTER AIR.
THE PEOPLE YOU MEET
AS YOU WALK DOWN THE STREET
HAVE CONGENIAL GREETINGS TO SHARE.
TOO BAD IT WON'T LAST
ONCE THAT CHRISTMAS IS PAST,
'CAUSE THE FEELING IS REALLY SUBLIME
AT CHRISTMASTIME.

(The ENSEMBLE immediately fans out and scatters about the stage. We now see FRANCINE and her children; PATRICIA, BRETT, ERNEST, and TAMMY in their Sunday best. There is much hustle and bustle around them as people arrive and depart from various directions. There is much commotion.)

FRANCINE: (To PATRICIA) Now you stay here with the children while I go find Mary

PATRICIA: Oh, mother, I still don't understand why we had to pick up Mrs. Tupper's niece. Why couldn't she do it herself?

FRANCINE: If it were left up to Mrs. Tupper, I'm afraid the poor girl would be spending Christmas in an orphanage. I'm sorry for delaying our arrival at church, but I simply must tend to this first. Now please watch the children.

TAMMY: Mommy, do you have to go?

FRANCINE: Yes, dear. I'll be right back. (To the BRETT & ERNEST) You boys behave for your sister. Remember, it's almost Christmas!

BRETT & ERNEST: Yes, Mother.

FRANCINE: Good. (To PATRICIA) I'll be right back.

(FRANCINE crosses to a TRAIN CONDUCTOR crossing from upright to upleft. He directs her to off right, she thanks him in pantomime and exits in that direction. TAMMY begins to take a mitten off her left hand.)

PATRICIA: Tammy, don't take your mitten off or you might lose it.

TAMMY: But my hand itches.

PATRICIA: That's because the mittens are made of wool. You should be grateful that you have a sister who knits for you. Otherwise, you'd have no mittens at all and then your hands would be cold.

TAMMY: Yes, but then they wouldn't itch.

BRETT: Oh, you're such a crybaby!

TAMMY: I am not!

BRETT: Are too!

ERNEST: (To BRETT) Don't tease her or she'll cry.

TAMMY: I will not.

PATRICIA: Stop it, all of you! Let's find something else to talk about! Why don't we try to guess what Mrs. Tupper's niece will be like?

BRETT: (Acting it out) Maybe she's a witch like old Mrs. Tupper! (HE chases TAMMY)

ERNEST: (Following BRETT'S cue) She's probably as mean as a goblin. (HE too pursues TAMMY)

TAMMY: (Shrieking) NO! (SHE runs and hides behind PATRICIA)

PATRICIA: Stop it! You're scaring your sister!

(WILLIAM HENDERSON, a young railroad porter happens to be walking by and notices

the common.)

WILLIAM: Is everything okay?

PATRICIA: Why, yes sir, the boys were just.... being boys, I guess. (Picking up TAMMY while speaking to her) It's alright, sweetheart, they were just teasing.

WILLIAM: These aren't YOUR children?

PATRICIA: Why, no. I'm only seventeen and I'm not married. (Suddenly pretending to be much more sophisticated) These are my mother's children.

WILLIAM: (Laughing) I see. (To TAMMY) And how old are you?

(TAMMY holds out her hand displaying five fingers)

WILLIAM: Five, huh?

(TAMMY nods her head "yes")

WILLIAM: Well, you're quite the young lady.

(TAMMY smiles)

WILLIAM: And how old are you two lads? Thirteen and fourteen?

BRETT: (Boldly) As a matter of fact we are!

ERNEST: (To BRETT) You're a liar! (To WILLIAM) He's twelve and I'm ten years old.

WILLIAM: Is that so? I would have guessed much older.

PATRICIA: You must think I'm terribly rude for not introducing myself. I'm Patricia O'Reilly and these are my brothers Brett and Ernest, and this is my sister, Tammy.

WILLIAM: It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I'm William Henderson, train porter, at your service.

BRETT: Here comes Mother. (Pointing) That must be Mary Jane.

(FRANCINE and MARY JANE enter stage carrying various pieces of luggage.)

FRANCINE: (To WILLIAM) Oh, porter!

WILLIAM: Yes, ma'am?

FRANCINE: I was wondering if you could help us.

WILLIAM: How could I be of service?

FRANCINE: (Pointing offstage) There is a steamer trunk on that train that needs to be delivered to this address. (Handing him a slip of paper) It's a pre-paid delivery. I just want to make sure it gets there sometime today.

WILLIAM: I'll take care of it ma'am.

FRANCINE: Thank you so much.

WILLIAM: (To PATRICIA and KIDS) Goodbye!

PATRICIA and KIDS: Goodbye, William!

FRANCINE: Did I interrupt something?

PATRICIA: Oh, no Mother. We were just talking.

FRANCINE: I see. I'd like to introduce you to Miss Mary Jane Pendergast. Mary Jane, these are my children; Patricia, Ernest, Brett, and Tammy.

MARY JANE: How do you do?

PATRICIA: Fine, thank you.

BRETT/ERNEST/TAMMY: Hello.

BRETT: So what's in the trunk?

FRANCINE: Brett! That's none of your business.

MARY JANE: Oh, it's quite alright. I don't mind. It's mostly full of clothes, and all of my other worldly possessions.

ERNEST: What are worldly possessions?

MARY JANE: Everything I own, except for my dog, Max. I had to leave him in Chicago with my friend Maggie.

BRETT: You had a dog and you couldn't bring him?

MARY JANE: Yes, but it's just as well because he was quite old and wouldn't have traveled very well. Maggie never had a dog before and now she has something to remember me by.

FRANCINE: You certainly do have a good attitude. Come on, let's take you to meet your Aunt.

MARY JANE: I haven't seen her since I was very little. Is she nice?

FRANCINE: It depends. I suppose the farther away you are, the nicer she is.

BRETT: (Sarcastically) I bet she seems wonderful from South America.

(FRANCINE gives him a stern look)

MARY JANE: I'm very fortunate to have Aunt Eliza to live with. Most children go to an orphanage once they've lost both parents.

FRANCINE: We're all real sorry about that, Mary Jane. How tragic for someone your age to experience such misfortune, to lose both of your parents.

TAMMY: Why are her parents lost, mommy?

FRANCINE: They're up in heaven, sweetheart.

TAMMY: With Grandma?

FRANCINE: Yes dear.

TAMMY: And Uncle Tom?

FRANCINE: Well, I'm not so sure where he ended up...

TAMMY: (To MARY JANE) Gee, I'm sorry you don't have any Mom or Dad.

SONG: "THERE'S A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR"

MARY JANE: (Singing)

MY PARENTS ARE IN HEAVEN LOOKING DOWN ON ME;
THOUGH I KNOW IT'S A BETTER PLACE FOR THEM TO BE.
I MISS THEM SO AND SOMETIMES GET UPSET—
I DON'T LIKE FEELING SO ALONE, AND YET...
THERE'S A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR:
THE SUN IN THE SKY,
WITH CLOUDS DRIFTING BY,
AND FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN MAY.
A SHADE WHEN IT'S HOT,
AND THEN, WHEN IT'S NOT,
WARM CLOTHES ON A WINTER DAY.
THERE'S A LOT TO BE THANKFUL FOR:
THE SWEET MELODY
OF A BIRD IN A TREE,
THE MOON SHINING CLEAR AND BRIGHT.
THE PATTERN OF RAIN
ON A WINDOW PANE
THAT LULLS ME TO SLEEP AT NIGHT.
I TRY NOT TO DWELL ON WHAT I LACK,
AND BE HAPPY WITH WHAT I'VE GOT.
THINGS HAPPEN THAT CAN'T BE TAKEN BACK,
AND MY LIFE CAN'T BE WHAT IT'S NOT.
I HAVE MET FIVE NEW FRIENDS TODAY.
AND PRETTY SOON I
WILL MEET MY AUNT ELIZA
AND SEE WHERE I'M GOING TO STAY.
THAT'S WHAT I'M MOST THANKFUL FOR—
'CAUSE I WON'T BE AN ORPHAN ANYMORE.

ERNEST: Good thing you're thankful now, because I don't think you will be once you've met your Aunt.

FRANCINE: (To ERNEST) That's quite enough. (To PATRICIA) Go on ahead and take the children to church. I'll meet you there.

PATRICIA: All right mother. It was nice meeting you, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE: It was my pleasure!

PATRICIA: Come on, let's go.

FRANCINE/BOYS/TAMMIE: Goodbye! (THEY EXIT)

FRANCINE/MARY JANE: Goodbye.

FRANCINE: Let's get the rest of your luggage.

(As they exit, FRANCINE, who has set down her handbag to pick up several pieces of MARY JANE'S luggage, accidentally leaves the handbag onstage. As they exit left they are intercepted by WILLIAM HENDERSON.)

WILLIAM: I took care of the trunk, ma'am. It will be delivered sometime today.

FRANCINE: Oh, thank you so much. Where is the baggage pick-up?

WILLIAM: (Pointing) Straight ahead, ma'am. You can't miss it!

FRANCINE: You've been very helpful! (SHE goes to tip him) Here's something for you... my purse! Where did I leave my purse? Oh dear, I might have left it by the train. Come on, Mary Jane. I hope I can find it! (THEY EXIT left)

(After they have exited WILLIAM has spotted the purse down center and he calls after FRANCINE, but she's too far away to hear him.)

WILLIAM: Oh, ma'am... Ma'am!

BLACKOUT

SCENE III – THE KITCHEN OF ELIZA'S HOUSE

(We see ELIZA giving instructions to her cook, Mrs. Barbara Jenkins, a rotund and stern-looking woman in her sixties.)

ELIZA: Now, just because my Niece will be staying with us a few days doesn't mean I want the menus changed.

MRS. JENKINS: Yes, ma'am, I just thought with a little girl staying here for the holidays that you might want a special meal prepared for Christmas day.

ELIZA: Absolutely not! Christmas is a day just like any other day. No need for richly-prepared foods that cost a fortune and add to your waistline. Revise these menus immediately and re-submit them for MY approval. And no asparagus this time – much too expensive! (SHE hands written menus back to MRS. JENKINS)

MRS. JENKINS: Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry to have upset you.

ELIZA: Where is Francine? I thought they'd be here by now!

MRS. JENKINS: Maybe the Hansom cab is having trouble getting through the streets. They're pretty crowded, what with all the holiday shopping.

ELIZA: Hansom cab? Well, I most certainly did not authorize that. If they took a cab they're paying for it out of their own pockets!

MRS. JENKINS: But how are they going to get here? The train station is thirty-nine blocks

away and they have luggage to carry.

ELIZA: They're young enough to walk! And it's a pleasant day, no rain.

MRS. JENKINS: But it's cold out!

ELIZA: Cold weather's good for you. It gets the blood running.

(MRS. JENKINS shakes her head in bewilderment as she continues to revise the week's menus from her table centerstage. FRANCINE enters with MARY JANE in tow.)

FRANCINE: (As SHE enters SHE speaks to an unseen person offstage) Thank you for the ride Mr. Evans.

(MARY JANE looks around excitedly)

FRANCINE: Mary Jane, this is your Aunt, Eliza Tupper.

MARY JANE: (Curtseys) I'm pleased to meet you. A very Merry Christmas to you.

ELIZA: Humph! And why are you so merry? Do you enjoy being an orphan?

FRANCINE: (Shocked) Mrs. Tupper!

MARY JANE: (Unruffled) I'm happy because I'm going to be living with you in this big, beautiful house.

ELIZA: That remains to be seen. Turn around, child. (MARY JANE turns around) I didn't think my brother had such a plain-looking girl.

(FRANCINE glares at ELIZA)

MARY JANE: (Innocently) You're not exactly what I expected, either.

(FRANCINE giggles)

ELIZA: Well, really!

(MARY JANE runs into the next room and begins looking about. She is followed in by ELIZA who is most puzzled.)

ELIZA: What are you looking for?

MARY JANE: Where's your Christmas tree?

(During song ELIZA shoos MARY JANE out of the living room and back into the kitchen where she runs to FRANCINE for comfort)

SONG: "CHRISTMAS"

ELIZA: (Singing)

I DON'T SPEND MONEY FOOLISHLY
ON SUCH THINGS AS A CHRISTMAS TREE
WHICH IN A WEEK YOU HAVE TO THROW AWAY.
I DON'T BELIEVE IN GIVING PRESENTS,

EATING MEALS OF GEESE OR PHEASANTS,
JUST TO CELEBRATE A SINGLE DAY.
I DON'T SEE WHAT'S SO SPECIAL IN THIS SEASON
THAT CAUSES FOLKS TO LOSE THEIR SENSE OF REASON.
CHRISTMAS—
A TIME WHEN PEOPLE ALL FELL
THEY SHOULD SPEND MONEY FREELY
ON THINGS THAT THEY REALLY DON'T NEED.
CHRISTMAS—
A TIME WHEN ILL-BEHAVED GIRLS AND BOYS
CLAMOR FOR USELESS TOYS,
SHOWING THE DEPTH OF THEIR GREED.
WHEN YOU'RE NORMALLY HARD-WORKING EMPLOYEES
WANT TO TAKE TIME OFF BUT STILL BE PAID.
HOW THOSE FAT BE-WHISKERED MEN ANNOY ME
WITH THEIR ANNUAL SANTA CLAUS CHARADE!
CHRISTMAS—
WHEN PARENTS LIE TO THEIR CHILDREN
UNTIL THEY ARE FILLED
TO THE BRIM WITH THAT FICTIONAL JUNK.
CHRISTMAS—
A TIME OF SUGARY SENTIMENT—
PEACE AND GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN—
SUCH UNATTAINABLE BUNK!
EV'RY CHARITY IN TOWN IS CALLING
LIKE A PACK OF HUNGRY JACKALS THEY TEEM!
EV'RYWHERE ARE CHOIRS CATERWAULING'
IF I HEAR ONE MORE CAROL, I'LL SCREAM!
CHRISTMAS—
BY NOW I FIGURE I'VE HEARD
QUITE ENOUGH OF THAT WORD;
(clutches throat)
MERRY CHRISTMAS IS STUCK IN MY CRAW!
IN THIS HOUSE THERE WILL NEVER BE
ANY YULETIDE FRIVOLITY;
ALL THAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME
IS—

(A silent doorbell has rung during the above passage. FRANCINE has gone to answer the door. We see CAROLERS singing the last part of "Deck the Halls" while ELIZA covers her ears. At the end, having had enough, ELIZA crosses to the door.)

CAROLERS: (singing)

DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY
FA LA LA LA LA
LA LA LA ...

ELIZA: (Shouting to CAROLERS) BAH! (SHE slams the door.)

CAROLERS: (From behind door) LA

(CAROLERS exit dejectedly. MARY JANE looks on in shock.)

FRANCINE: (Glaring at ELIZA) Well, I'd love to stay and chat, but I'm late for church. Besides, I need to go back to the train station to look for my handbag.

ELIZA: Not so fast, Francine! I need you to go to town for me and pick up some groceries from the market.

FRANCINE: But, Mrs. Tupper, this is my day off. I only came by to bring your Niece.

ELIZA: Are you still in my employ?

FRANCINE: Well, yes...

ELIZA: Do you not wish to stay employed?

FRANCINE: But I promised my children I'd meet them at church.

ELIZA: You also promised to feed and clothe them on the weekly wages I pay you, didn't you?

FRANCINE: Well, yes, but...

ELIZA: Then take the grocery list I have prepared from cook's menus and see that I get the best price on every item. And don't go to that butcher on Delancey Street, he charges too much for his old poultry! Oh, and I have a coat that needs mending. But first, show Mary Jane to her room. (To MARY JANE) Breakfast will be served at eight-thirty sharp each morning, lunch is at twelve and dinner is served at five. There will be no playing in the house and I don't want to find you wandering the halls. This is not a playground! First thing next week you start boarding school! And don't mention Christmas to me ever again!

MARY JANE: yes, ma'am.

FRANCINE: This way, Mary Jane. (MARY JANE and FRANCINE exit)

BLACKOUT

SCENE IV – THE UPSTAIRS ATTIC OF MRS. TUPPER'S HOUSE

FRANCINE: Here's your room. It certainly isn't much to look at. With all the rooms in this house you'd think your Aunt could've found a better place for you than in the attic.

MARY JANE: It'll be alright, really!

FRANCINE: You certainly have a good attitude about this.

MARY JANE: I'm just happy to have a place to stay, even if it's only temporary.

SONG: "MY OWN ROOM"

MARY JANE: (singing)

MY OWN ROOM AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS,
ONE WHOLE ROOM JUST FOR ME!
UP SO HIGH
LIKE A BIRD IN THE SKY—
WHAT A NICE PLACE TO BE!
MY OWN ROOM GOES SO HIGH IN THE AIR,
I AM SURE I CAN SEE
THROUGH THE WINDOW

THE WHOLE WORLD BELOW
LOOKING UP AT ME.
THOUGH THERE'S LOTS OF STAIRS TO CLIMB,
IT'S NOT ALL THAT BAD,
EACH STEP HIGHER MEANS THAT I'M
CLOSER TO MOM AND DAD.
SO IT'S NOT VERY NICE—I DON'T CARE,
I'M JUST GLAD THAT IT'S MINE.
IT'S OLD AND DUSTY
BUT IT WILL BE JUST FINE.
I'LL BE HAPPY
IN THIS ROOM OF MINE.

(MARY JANE repeats her song while FRANCINE sings in counterpoint)

FRANCINE: (singing)

THIS OLD ROOM ISN'T WHAT YOU DESERVE,
IT IS SUCH A DISGRACE!
AND IF I HAD THE NERVE,
I'D TELL IT TO HER FACE
YOU'RE SO SWEET TO BE ACTING THIS WAY,
I KNOW I WOULDN'T BE!
SOMEDAY SHE'S GONNA PAY
FOR HER LACK OF CHARITY.
YOU'RE AS NICE AS NICE CAN BE—
YOUR AUNT IS MEAN AND HATED—
IT'S AN INCONGRUITY THAT YOU TWO ARE RELATED
I WILL HELP YOU TO CLEAN UP THIS PLACE,
IT WILL TAKE LOTS OF TIME.
BUT HARD WORK WILL ERASE THE YEARS OF DIRT AND GRIME.
WE WILL DO WONDERS TO YOUR ROOM.

FRANCINE: I think I have some curtains in one of the spare rooms that just might dress up that window. And maybe a picture for that wall. (As SHE starts to exit) I'll bring the rest of your things up later when they arrive.

MARY JANE: Thank you, that's very nice of you.

FRANCINE: Oh, think nothing of it. In the meantime, if you'd like something to do while you're here, I can bring you some books from the library. What kind of books do you like to read?

MARY JANE: I don't suppose there are any books about Christmas?

FRANCINE: It's possible. The library belonged to your Uncle and he enjoyed celebrating Christmas.

MARY JANE: What did he die of?

FRANCINE: Terminal aggravation would be my guess. Now that I think of it, your Uncle did own a copy of "A Christmas Carol", I'll see if I can find it for you while you unpack.

MARY JANE: Thank you.

FRANCINE: You're welcome. I'm glad you're here.

MART JANE. ME TOO.

BLACKOUT

SCENE V – THE O'REILLY HOUSEHOLD THAT EVENING

(We see MARTIN O'REILLY seated in his wheelchair holding young TAMMY on his lap. He is reading her a story while BRETT and ERNEST help PATRICIA clear the dinner dishes.)

MARTIN: (Reading) "He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, and away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night."

TAMMY: (Clapping) Oh, Daddy, I liked that story. Read it to me again!

MARTIN: No, sweetheart. It's almost your bedtime.

TAMMY: But I can't go to bed yet, Daddy. Mommy's not home and she always tucks me in and kisses me goodnight.

MARTIN: You'll just have to settle for me, pumpkin. It's your bedtime, too, boys. Come, children, let's say our prayers. (The BOYS and PATRICIA gather around MARTIN.)

SONG: "EVENING PRAYER"

MARTIN: (Singing)

HEAR US, LORD, WE PRAY,
AT THE CLOSE OF DAY,
KEEP US SAFE FROM THOSE WHO WISH US HARM,
GUIDE US THROUGH THE NIGHT
WITH THY HOLY LIGHT,
CRADLED IN THE SHELTER OF THINE ARMS.

CHILDREN: (Singing)

GOD BLESS FATHER, GOD BLESS MOTHER,

BOYS: (Singing)

BLESS OUR SISTERS,

TAMMY/PATRICIA: (Singing)

BLESS OUR BROTHERS,

PATRICIA: (Singing)

BLESS ALL THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN WE.

TAMMY: Are there any? (PATRICIA gives her a disapproving look)

BOYS: (Singing)

MAKE THE FOLKS WITH LOTS OF MONEY
SHARE WITH THOSE WHO AIN'T GOT NONE—

TAMMY: (Singing)

AND THAT MEANS MISSUS TUPPER, 'SPECIALLY!
(BOYS stifle a smile, MARTIN shakes his head)

MARTIN: (Singing)

WE DON'T HAVE A LOT,
BUT FOR WHAT WE'VE GOT,
WE GIVE THANKS FOR ALL THAT THOU HAST DONE.
LORD, FOREVER BE
WITH US AND US WITH THEE.
GOD BLESS US, EV'RYONE!

(Simultaneously)

MARTIN: (Singing)

CHILDREN: (Singing)

HEAR US, LORD WE PRAY,
AT THE CLOSE OF DAY,

HEAR US, LORD, WE PRAY,
AT THE CLOSE OF DAY, KEEP

US SAFE FROM

THOSE WHO WISH US HARM.
GUIDE US THROUGH THE NIGHT

THOSE WHO WISH HARM
GUIDE US THROUGH THE

NIGHT

WITH THY HOLY LIGHT,

WITH THY HOLY LIGHT,

CRADLED IN THE

SHELTER OF THINE ARMS.
LORD, PLEASE
LET ME

SHELTER OF THINE ARMS.
GOD BLESS FATHER,
GOD BLESS MOTHER,

BOYS: (Singing)

WALK
AGAIN,

BLESS OUR SISTERS,

TAMMY/PATRICIA: (Singing)
BLESS OUR BROTHERS,

PATRICIA: (Singing)

HOW I
WISH THAT
I COULD BE

BLESS ALL THOSE LESS
FORTUNATE THAN WE.

BOYS: (Singing)

JUST THE
SAME AS
OTHER
MEN

MAKE THE FOLKS WITH
LOTS OF MONEY
SHARE WITH THOSE WHO
AIN'T GOT NONE—

TAMMY: (Singing)

AND SUPPORT
MY FAMILY!

AND THAT MEANS MISSUS
TUPPER 'SPECIALLY!

CHILDREN: (Singing)

WE DON'T HAVE A LOT,
BUT FOR WHAT WE'VE GOT,

ALL THAT THOU HAST DONE.

DONE

LORD, FOREVER BE
WITH US, AND US WITH THEE.
GOD BLESS US
EV'RYONE!

WE DON'T HAVE A LOT,
BUT FOR WHAT WE'VE GOT,
WE GIVE THANKS FOR
FOR ALL THAT THOU HAST

EVER BE
WITH THEE.
GOD BLESS US
EV'RYONE!

PATRICIA: (To TAMMY) Kiss your father goodnight and get into bed. I'll come to tuck you in later.

TAMMY: Okay. (Kissing her father) Goodnight, Daddy.

MARTIN: Goodnight, pumpkin. (She exits with the book) You too, boys.

BRETT: Aw—can't we wait 'till Mother comes home?

MARTIN: She might not be home for hours. Off to bed, now.

PATRICIA: Listen to your father, boys.

ERNEST: Cone on, Brett. We'll see her in the morning.

BRETT: Goodnight Father.

ERNEST: Goodnight Father.

MARTIN: Goodnight you two. (HE hugs them both) Go right to sleep. (THEY EXIT. To PATRICIA) What could possibly be keeping your Mother?

(There is knock on the door)

PATRICIA: Perhaps that's her now.

MARTIN: But if it's your Mother, why would she knock?

PATRICIA: Well, there's only one way to find out. (She crosses to the door) Who is it?

WILLIAM: It's William Henderson from the train station. I'm returning a lost purse.

PATRICIA: (Opening door) But I didn't lose a purse.

WILLIAM: (Seeing PATRICIA) Ah, but I believe it belongs to your Mother. I found this address sewn inside. (HE presents the handbag to her.)

PATRICIA: Oh, yes. This is her handbag, but I don't understand how you ended up with it.

WILLIAM: She left it at the station. I tried to return it but I lost her in the crowd. So I thought I'd return it in person.

PATRICIA: How kind of you.

WILLIAM: Is your Mother here?

PATRICIA: Please come in. (To MARTIN) Father, this is Mr. Henderson.

WILLIAM: William, please.

PATRICIA: William Henderson... from the train station. He's returning Mother's handbag. My mother hasn't returned home yet, but if she were here I'm sure she would be very grateful that you returned her purse.

MARTIN: Aren't you going to introduce ME?

PATRICIA: Oh, I'm sorry. William, this is my father, Martin O'Reilly.

WILLIAM: (Shaking hands) Pleased to meet you, sir.

MARTIN: (Pointing to the chair next to him) Same here. Please, have a seat. So you work at the train station, eh?

WILLIAM: Yes, sir. I'm a porter. I check bags and load them on and off the trains.

MARTIN: I see. And do you enjoy it?

WILLIAM: Oh, yes sir. I get to meet a lot of wonderful people while I'm working. (HE smiles at PATRICIA.)

MARTIN: I'm going to retire soon, so please excuse me. It was nice meeting you, William.

WILLIAM: Nice meeting you too, sir.

MARTIN: Patricia, wake me when your Mother comes home.

PATRICIA: Yes Father, I will. Goodnight.

MARTIN: Goodnight. (HE EXITS)

WILLIAM: (Stage whisper) Why is your father in a wheelchair?

PATRICIA: He was crippled in a factory accident.

WILLIAM: How awful.

PATRICIA: He lost his job because he can't walk.

WILLIAM: Isn't there anything the doctors can do?

PATRICIA: He refuses to see a doctor because it will cost too much. My mother works to support us, but her employer doesn't pay enough money to afford any doctors.

WILLIAM: That's too bad. He seems like such a nice man.

PATRICIA: Oh, he is. He's a terrific dad and a wonderful husband. But he feels useless and doesn't like the fact that we kids have to do more of the work around the house now that he can't.

WILLIAM: I'd be more than happy to lend a hand if you ever needed, or wanted me to.

PATRICIA: That's most kind of you to offer, William, but why would you want to help us?

WILLIAM: Your father's had more than his share of bad luck and I'd like to make things easier for him. Besides, I'm also quite taken with his daughter.

PATRICIA: You mean me?

WILLIAM: (Laughing) I think Tammy is a swell girl, but it's you I'm most interested in. Do you suppose I could call on you sometime?

PATRICIA: I don't know. We hardly know each other.

WILLIAM: And I'd like to do something about that. (HE removes his porter cap and flings it onto the kitchen table in a burst of confidence)

SONG: "I'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU/I'VE GOT RESPONSIBILITIES"

WILLIAM: (Singing)

I'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU,
I'D LIKE TO GIVE IT A WHIRL.
WE ONLY MET
TODAY, AND YET,
I KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY KIND OF GIRL.
I'D REALLY GET TO KNOW YOU,
IF YOU'D GO STEPPING OUT WITH ME.
MY FUNDS ARE LOW,
BUT WE CAN GO
TO PLACES INEXPENSIVE OR FREE.
WE COULD FIND A LOT OF THINGS TO DO,
LIKE SKATING IN THE PARK OR GOING TO THE ZOO.
THERE IS NOT A THING THAT WON'T BE FUN,
AS LONG AS IT IS DONE
WITH YOU!
I'D LIKE THE CHANCE TO SHOW YOU
THAT I'M A LIKABLE GUY.
WHAT DO YOU SAY,
ON SATURDAY
WE AGREE TO GIVE IT A TRY?
THEN I COULD GET TO KNOW YOU,
AND YOU COULD GET TO KNOW ME TOO.

PATRICIA: That's not possible.

WILLIAM: Why not?

PATRICIA: (Singing)

I'VE GOT RESPONSIBILITIES,
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO SPEND WITH YOU.
MY MOTHER WORKS ALL DAY,
AND WHILE SHE IS AWAY,
I'VE GOT A LOT OF THINGS TO DO.

WILLIAM: How about when she gets home?

PATRICIA: (Singing)

THAT'S NOT A POSSIBILITY,
QUITE OFTEN SHE'LL BE WORKING LATE.
IT REALLY WOULD BE RARE
WHEN I'D HAVE TIME TO SPARE
FOR US TO GO ON A DATE.
I'VE GOT TO COOK AND WASH AND SEW,
AND WATCH THE KIDS AND MOP AND SWEEP!
AND WHEN MY WORK IS FIN'LLY OVER
ALL I WANT TO DO IS SLEEP!
I'VE GOT RESPONSIBILITIES,
UNFORTUNATE, BUT IT'S TRUE.
MAYBE IF YOU WAIT
UNTIL I'M TWENTY-EIGHT,
I'LL FIND SOME TIME FOR ME AND YOU!
TIL THEN I MUST FULFILL
MY RESPONSIBILITIES!

WILLIAM: But, Patricia...

(They repeat their songs in counterpoint.)

(At songs end, the couple stands face to face and are about to kiss when the door swings open and FRANCINE enters.)

PATRICIA: (Facing the door, SHE breaks away from WILLIAM.) Mother!

WILLIAM: (Embarrassed) Well, I should be going.

MARTIN: (Calling from offstage) Patricia, is that your Mother?

PATRICIA: Yes, Father! Hello Mother!

(WILLIAM wants to make a quick get-away, but feels trapped at both ends.)

FRANCINE: Hello Patricia. (Noticing WILLIAM) Well, hello there. I didn't expect to see you here.

WILLIAM: Hello again, ma'am. (Nervously he claims his hat from the dining table in an attempt to make a quick departure. FRANCINE intercepts him as he heads for the door.)

FRANCINE: What brings you here?

PATRICIA: William was just returning your handbag, Mother. You left it at the train station. (Handing her purse to her)

FRANCINE: There it is! Why, I've been looking all over town for that. I couldn't remember where I left it. Thank you for bringing it here, William. You are a savior!

WILLIAM: (Beaming) It was my pleasure, ma'am. (HE throws his hat back on the table to signify his decision to stay.)

FRANCINE: However did you manage to find us?

WILLIAM: By the label sewn in the purse. (PATRICIA beams)

FRANCINE: (To PATRICIA) I guess I have my daughter to thank as well.

WILLIAM. why is that?

FRANCINE: (Crossing to PATRICIA she slowly manages to push her towards WILLIAM) She's the one who sewed the label in my purse. She does all the mending and sewing around here. Not to mention the cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the kids. I couldn't manage without her.

WILLIAM: I see. (To PATRICIA) You ARE quite a find, then. (PATRICIA giggles) Well, I should be going. Merry Christmas to the both of you.

PATRICIA: Merry Christmas William.

FRANCINE: And a Merry Christmas to you, William. Will you be spending Christmas with your family?

WILLIAM: No, ma'am. My family is out of state.

FRANCINE: Will you be going home for Christmas?

PATRICIA: (Whispered loudly out of embarrassment) Mother!

WILLIAM: As a matter of fact, no. I have to work the next day.

FRANCINE: In that case would you like to join us for Christmas dinner? It won't be very fancy, but Patricia is an excellent cook and we'd love to have you. Wouldn't we Patricia?

PATRICIA: Yes, of course.

FRANCINE: It's the least we can do since you were kind enough to go out of your way to return my handbag.

WILLIAM: Why, I would love to join you for Christmas dinner.

FRANCINE: We'll look forward to seeing you. Won't we Patricia?

(PATRICIA glares at her MOTHER then smiles as she notices that WILLIAM is watching her.)

WILLIAM: What time?

FRANCINE: Well, you could meet us at church. Ten o'clock at St. Michael's. (pause) You are Catholic, aren't you?

WILLIAM: (Slightly dejected) Actually, no. But I do have a cousin on my Mother's side that lived in a convent once.

FRANCINE: (Thinking about it) Close enough! We'll meet you outside the church at a quarter to ten.

PATRICIA: Now Mother, really! If he doesn't want to go to our church...

WILLIAM: (Turning to PATRICIA) I don't mind. I'd love to walk down any church aisle with you.

PATRICIA: (Interested) Really?

(NOW IT IS OBVIOUS THAT PATRICIA IS TRULY SHUTTEN)

FRANCINE: (Alarmed, she begins pushing WILLIAM out the door.) Good. Then it's all settled. Thanks again for returning the handbag!

WILLIAM: You are most certainly welcome ma'am... goodnight.

FRANCINE: Goodnight William.

PATRICIA: Yes, goodnight William. Merry Christmas.

(FRANCINE slams the door.)

WILLIAM: (From behind the door) Merry Christmas. (HE EXITS)

FRANCINE: (With back against the door) He looks promising.

PATRICIA: Oh, Mother. Really!

(MARTIN ENTERS)

MARTIN: Francine, is that you?

FRANCINE: Yes, dear. I'm home.

PATRICIA: Finally.

FRANCINE: I'm sorry. It's just that Mrs. Tupper...

PATRICIA: Is an old grouch who likes making other peoples' lives miserable.

FRANCINE: Patricia!

MARTIN: She's right. That woman has no sense of humanity. After all, it's Sunday. What business does she have to keep you so late on a Sunday? It's your only day off!

FRANCINE; I know, dear. But her Niece arrived from Chicago today and I had to help settle her in. It was my idea that Mrs. Tupper took her in the first place.

PATRICIA: If you'll both excuse me I have some laundry to fold. I left some chicken and stuffing in the oven for you Mother, if you're hungry.

FRANCINE: Yes, I am. Thank you, Patricia.

PATRICIA: Goodnight Mother. (SHE embraces her)

FRANCINE: Goodnight.

PATRICIA: (Embracing MARTIN) Goodnight Father.

MARTIN: Goodnight Patricia.

(PATRICIA EXITS)

MARTIN: It's my fault you have to continue working for that wicked woman. If I hadn't lost my job we wouldn't be in this awful mess.

FRANCINE: What awful mess!

MARTIN: You having to work to support the family, Patricia taking care of the house and kids, the boys doing chores instead of playing like the other children in the neighborhood...

FRANCINE: Oh, they don't mind Martin. Besides, we're all here together. That's what's most important. Now stop your fretting and come keep me company while I eat. I'm absolutely starved. (Crossing to table)

MARTIN: You know, Francy. I don't know what I did to deserve you, but I thank my lucky stars every night that I've got an angel like you. (Rolling wheelchair to her.)

FRANCINE: Well, I feel pretty lucky to have you and the kids too, you know. Together we make a pretty good crew. Don't you agree?

MARTIN: I do. I most certainly do! I love you, Mrs. O'Reilly. (HE puts his arms around her.)

FRANCINE: And I love you, Mr. O'Reilly. (SHE kisses him.)

(SPOT on the O'REILLY'S as lights fade to BLACKOUT.)

SCENE VI – MRS. TUPPER'S FRONT DOOR AND STUDY THE NEXT DAY

(A kindly gentleman, BARTHOLLOMEW SAUNDERS, has entered during the blackout and is seen knocking on the front door of the Tupper residence. Several STREET URCHINS accompany him. MARY JANE crosses from offstage reading a leather-bound copy of "A Christmas Carol". She answers the door.)

SAUNDERS: Good day, Miss. Merry Christmas.

MARY JANE: Merry Christmas.

SAUNDERS: May I please speak to the master of the house?

MARY JANE: I'm afraid you can't. He's dead.

SAUNDERS: Does he have a widow?

MARY JANE: Yes, my Aunt Eliza.

SAUNDERS: May I speak to her, please?

MARY JANE: Well, it's alright with me but that all depends on her. I'll ask her to come to the door, but I might suggest that you don't mention Christmas to her. Wait here please.

(SAUNDERS looks about, a bit perplexed. MARY JANE returns with ELIZA.)

SAUNDERS: Good day, ma'am. I'm Bartholomew Saunders, of the New York Board of Orphanages. I am here to appeal to your kind and generous heart on behalf of these (motions to URCHINS) poor and destitute children. Many orphans may find themselves without shelter this Christmas if the bank forecloses on our local orphanage, due to lack of funds.

ELIZA: Why are the funds lacking?

SAUNDERS: Well, you see, the foundation of the building dates back to 1637 and the water pipes burst last January. Repair bills have escalated to...

ELIZA: Sir, I am a very busy woman.

SAUNDERS: I understand, ma'am. But couldn't you possibly see fit to make a donation...

ELIZA: I do not make donations. Money must be earned, not given away, to be truly appreciated.

SAUNDERS: But these are orphans, ma'am.

ELIZA: Are they without hands and legs?

SAUNDERS: Why no, of course not.

ELIZA: Do they suffer from Malaria, Tetanus, or Tuberculosis?

SAUNDERS: Why, no ma'am. They are all in reasonably good health.

ELIZA: Then they are fully capable of being put to work! Fill the factories with them for all I care, but leave me alone! (SAUNDERS is shocked.)

STREET URCHINS: (Singing)

MISSUS SCROOGE, MISSUS SCROOGE
PINCHES EV'RY PENNY.
SHE HAS GOT SUCH A LOT
AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY.

ELIZA: (Screaming) Scat! All of you! Before I call Officer Fogarty and have you all arrested for trespassing private property... (pause) and disturbing the peace! (URCHINS EXIT running. SAUNDERS walks off in complete disgust. ELIZA watches them exit then closes the door.) Why do they call me Mrs. Scrooge? What is that about?

(MARY JANE has pulled off her left shoe and has taken out several shiny coins she was about to give to SAUNDERS shortly before he was chased away. She is now crying.)

ELIZA: Why are you crying? What are you doing with those coins?

MARY JANE: (Crying) I was going to give them to the orphans before you chased that man away.

ELIZA: (Taking coins) You will do no such foolish thing!

MARY JANE: But, it's my money to give!

ELIZA: Not as long as you are staying in my house! I will not permit such foolish behavior! You must save your money, instead of giving it away. And since you intend on throwing your father's money away, I'll have to keep it in my safe until you show more responsibility towards personal finance.

MARY JANE: (Crying) But you have no right! I was saving that to buy you a Christmas present, but since you don't like Christmas I thought maybe someone less fortunate, like the orphans, could use it! But you don't care about me or how I feel. (ELIZA begins to walk

away) THE CHILDREN IN TOWN ARE RIGHT! YOU ARE MRS. SCROOGE! Just like the character I've been reading about in "A Christmas Carol"! You're stingy, mean, and all you care about is money!

ELIZA: (Stopping in her tracks) What? What's that you're saying?

MARY JANE: (Tossing book) Here! Read it, and see for yourself! Personally, I would rather live in an orphanage than to stay here with an old miser like you, MRS. SCROOGE! (SHE runs out crying)

ELIZA: How dare you! Insolent child! How dare you call me... old!

(ELIZA is completely alone in the hallway. SHE stares at the book on the floor. SHE looks to make sure no one is watching. SHE picks up the book, examines it carefully, then begins reading it as lights fade to BLACKOUT.)

SCENE VII – MARY JANE'S ATTIC BEDROOM, MINUTES LATER

(We see MARY JANE lying on her bed, crying. SHE takes a small picture out of a wooden heart-shaped treasure box. The room has been redecorated by FRANCINE with new curtains, a picture in a frame, new bedspread, etc.)

MARY JANE: Oh, Daddy. Why doesn't Aunt Eliza like me?

(FRANCINE enters cautiously.)

FRANCINE: Is everything alright?

MARY JANE: No, I'm miserable. Why didn't you tell me that my Aunt is a perfectly awful woman and that I'd be better off livin' in the street?

FRANCINE: There, there. It can't be as bad as all that? (MARY JANE gives her a sullen look.) Alright, maybe it is as bad as all that. But it will get better. (SHE crosses to the bed and sits down next to MARY JANE.)

MARY JANE: Does Aunt Eliza hate me?

FRANCINE: No, sweetheart. Your Aunt doesn't hate you.

MARY JANE: Are you sure?

FRANCINE: Your Aunt doesn't like anybody right now, including herself. She's just unhappy. You see, your Aunt was different when her husband was alive. Your Uncle loved life and everything in it. He especially loved Christmas.

MARY JANE: (Surprised) He did?

FRANCINE: Oh yes. It was his most favorite time of year. It used to be said that no one kept Christmas better than your Uncle. Every Christmas Eve he would have the most splendid party right here in this very house. All his closest friends and neighbors would gather here in their finest clothes to sing carols and tell stories. And there would be food and frolic and fun for everyone. Your Uncle loved everyone and everyone loved him. But after your Uncle died, your Aunt stopped keeping Christmas because without him, she didn't feel

the joy of Christmas. It was his generous nature that kept Christmas in her heart and now that's gone too, I'm afraid. But cheer up; perhaps all she needs is someone like yourself to help remind her of the true spirit of Christmas. (SHE hugs MARY JANE)

SONG: "DRY YOUR EYES"

FRANCINE: (Singing)

DRY YOUR EYES AND GET RID OF THAT FROWN,
LET THOSE PRETTY TEETH SHOW.
DON'T BE CAUGHT WITH YOUR SMILE UPSIDE – DOWN,
THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO GO.
DRY YOUR EYES, SHE'S NOT WORTH ALL THOSE TEARS,
'CAUSE WHATEVER YOU DO
SHE'S BEEN ANGRY FOR SO MANY YEARS,
THERE'S NO LOVE LEFT FOR YOU.
YOU LOST ALL YOUR FAMILY,
SHE LOST HER HUSBAND, TOO.
BUT FOR SOME STRANGE REASON SHE
CAN'T BEAR IT AS WELL AS YOU.
MAYBE SOMEDAY ELIZA WILL SEE
JUST HOW SPECIAL YOU ARE.
BUT 'TIL THEN BE LIKE A STAR,
KEEP ON SHINING BRIGHT.
SO WIPE AWAY EACH TEAR
AND PUT A SMILE RIGHT HERE.

(FRANCINE draws a smile with her index finger over MARY JANE'S mouth, MARY JANE attempts a smile.)

HAVE FAITH THAT EV'RYTHING WILL TURN OUT RIGHT.

(THEY EMBRACE)

BLACKOUT

**To Read The Rest,
Please Purchase The
Script**