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SF PERUSALS

Humbug

by

John Wooten



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
NEW YORK HOLLYWOOD LONDON TORONTO
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"HUMBUG was originally produced at Premiere Stages, an Equity theatre in residence at Kean University"

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

HUMBUG was originally produced by Premiere Stages at Kean University, a professional Equity theatre in Union, NJ.

Producer: Lindsay Gambini
Associate Producer: Elizabeth Coen
Director: John Wooten
Set Designer: Bill Moytka
Lighting Designer: Brant Thomas Murray
Costume Designer: Karen Lee Hart
Sound Designer: Bryan Pekarek
Stage Manager: Rosie Goldman
Casting Director: Carol Hanzel

The December cast included:

ELEANOR SCROOGE . . . . . Rita Rehn
BOBBIE CRATCHIT . . . . . Jordan Simmons
CAROLER #1/TESS/PRESENT . . . . . Andrea Bianchi
CAROLER #2/TUG/BILL . . . . . Shabazz Green
CAROLER #3/ELLIE/LISA . . . . . Susanna Harris
CAROLER #4/PAST/JUAN . . . . . Jon Hoche
JOHN/ROBERT/GRAVEDIGGER . . . . . Jason Marr
PHIL . . . . . Matthew DeCapua
SARAH . . . . . Lacey Jones
BEN . . . . . Jeff Ronan
MARLEY/BENSON . . . . . Allen Lewis Rickman
YOUNG PHIL/TIMMY . . . . . Tommy Kouten
CARLA/NELLIE . . . . . Emma Gordon
FUTURE . . . . . Robert Cole

CHARACTERS

ELEANOR SCROOGE: 40s; female; attractive; corporate; sharp; sarcastic; intimidating.

BOBBIE CRATCHIT: 30s; female; a good soul; loyal; mother; Scrooge's assistant.

CAROLER #1/PRESENT: 30s; female, exceptionally adept character actress; small; requires cockney accent; sings well.

CAROLER #2/ELLIE/LISA: 20s; female; attractive; plays Young Scrooge; versatile actress required; sings well.

CAROLER #3/TUG/BILL/BENSON: 30s; male; versatile actor required; sings well.

CAROLER #4/PAST/JUAN: 20s; male; handsome; strong comic and versatile actor required; sings well.

BEN/JACOB MARLEY/GRAVEDIGGER: 40s-50s; male; strong comic and versitile actor required.

PHIL: 20s; male; Scrooge's nephew; good-natured and likable.

JOHN/ROBERT/FUTURE: 30s; male; tall; handsome; charming; strong comic and versatile actor required.

SARAH/NURSE/NELLIE: 20s; female; strong comic and versatile actress required.

TESS/CARLA: LATE 20s; female; plays Eleanor's sister; versatile actress required.

YOUNG PHIL/TIMMY: 9; male; plays Eleanor's nephew and Bobbie's son; stage experience required.

TIME

The Present, Christmas Eve

SETTING

A Wall Street Office Suite, on the 16th Floor

Allowed changes to script: The lines refering to Past's ethnitcy can be altered should an Asian actor not be cast in the role. The height of Past can also be changed to represent the actual height of the actor playing the role.

For Andrea
The funniest gal I know

(Lights rise on **ELEANOR SCROOGE***'s corporate office suite on the 16th floor of a Manhattan High-Rise.* **ELEANOR** *is in her office working frantically in front of her computer.* **BOBBIE CRATCHIT** *sits at her desk in the reception area. In front of her desk are a group of* **CAROLERS** *enthusiastically singing "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."* **BOBBIE** *and the carolers are bundled up in coats. The windows are frosted with ice [from the inside]. The windows in* **ELEANOR***'s office are covered with blinds. A coat rack with* **ELEANOR***'s long black coat is behind her desk against the upstage wall.* **BOBBIE** *smiles at the carolers, enjoying their rendition.* **ELEANOR** *looks up from her computer screen and watches the* **CAROLERS** *a moment through her door. She looks back at the screen, mumbling to herself. The* **CAROLERS** *continue, singing more loudly.* **ELEANOR** *rises from her desk and crosses to the door. She watches the carolers for a moment, smiles, and then slams her door with full force. Frightened, the* **CAROLERS** *abruptly stop singing. They look at* **BOBBIE**. **BOBBIE** *smiles weakly at the carolers, a bit embarrassed.)*

BOBBIE. Maybe a bit softer.

(The **CAROLERS** *smile. They gather around* **BOBBIE** *and begin to sing again, in little more than a whisper.* **ELEANOR** *slowly looks up from her computer screen. She listens. She then yells into her intercom that connects to* **BOBBIE***'s desk.)*

ELEANOR. Fire!

(The **CAROLERS** *leap away from the intercom and scramble toward the door.)*

BOBBIE. Wait!

*(***BOBBIE** *crosses to the door, carrying her purse.* **ELEANOR** *laughs – quite pleased with herself – and goes back*

to her computer screen.)

BOBBIE. I'm sorry.

*(***BOBBIE** *digs through her tattered purse, trying to find change. She digs out all that she has – a few rumpled dollar bills and coins – and gives them to the* **CAROLERS**. *She has nothing left to give the last* **CAROLER** *so she shakes his hand. The* **CAROLERS** *say "Thank you," "Merry Christmas," "Happy Holidays" etc. as they exit. Frazzled,* **BOBBIE** *closes the door and leans her back against it. She sighs. She crosses back to her desk and begins to stuff a great deal of files into her large, tattered briefcase.* **ELEANOR** *talks into the intercom to* **BOBBIE**.*)*

ELEANOR. I need the memo on the Misslehouse takeover, Cratchit.

BOBBIE. Which takeover, Ma'am?

ELEANOR. Misslehouse!

BOBBIE. I haven't proofed it.

ELEANOR. It's alright. Too many cooks spoil the broth.

*(***BOBBIE** *begins to pack files into the large briefcase)*

And don't even think of packing up until that document is on my desk.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Can I turn up the thermostat a bit?

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* I already turned it up once. If you wanted to bake, you should have stayed in L.A.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* But there's ice on the inside of the windows.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* You're on the 16th floor, Cratchit. What do you expect to see?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Just up to 60?…50?

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* What is the most important thing I've taught you over the past six years?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* What else? More relevant to your request.

*(***BOBBIE** *begins to grab Post-its she has pasted in various places on and around her computer.)*

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

*(***ELEANOR** *sighs into the intercom.)*

You dance with what brung ya'?

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* I said relevant!

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Complainers drain, solvers reign.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Right. And which do you strive to be, Cratchit? A complainer or a solver?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* I wasn't complaining, Ma'am, I only…

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Enough. Buy a thicker coat, Roberta.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Yes, Ma'am.

*(***BOBBIE** *begins humming a Christmas carol.* **ELEANOR** *listens at the door.)*

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Are those screaming mimis still here?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* The carolers? No.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Oh, god. Were you singing again?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Humming.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Well, don't. Singing, humming, or any musical sound coming from you is not a good idea, Cratchit. A closed mouth catches no flies.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Yes, Ma'am.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Did your husband encourage you to make that noise?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* No, Ma'am.

ELEANOR. *(under her breath)* I didn't think so. Probably what drove him away.

*(***BOBBIE** *hears her.* **BOBBIE** *grabs her purse, keys, and picture frames on her desk and heads for the door.* **ELEANOR** *realizes she may have gone too far [even for her].)*

Alright. You can turn the heat up. To 55…Cratchit? You there?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Uh…I am. Yes, Ma'am. Thank you.

*(***BOBBIE** *considers. She crosses to the thermostat. She turns it up. She puts her things back on the desk and sticks her tongue out at* **ELEANOR***'s closed door. She gives a raspberry, makes gyrations toward* **ELEANOR***'s door, etc.* **JOHN** *enters and watches* **BOBBIE**. **BOBBIE** *turns and sees him. She stops her movements, embarrassed.)*

JOHN. Good evening.

BOBBIE. Good evening.

JOHN. Is Ms. Scrooge in?

*(***BOBBIE** *crosses to her desk.)*

BOBBIE. Can I help you with…?

JOHN. I need to speak with her about my company.

BOBBIE. Do you have an appointment?

JOHN. It's urgent.

BOBBIE. I'm sorry, but she requires an appointment for anyone she sees.

*(***BOBBIE** *checks her scheduling book.)*

I could fit you in next Friday if…

JOHN. It can't wait.

*(***BOBBIE** *looks at* **JOHN**.*)*

Please.

*(***BOBBIE** *considers. She reaches over to the intercom.)*

BOBBIE. Your name?

JOHN. John Misslehouse.

BOBBIE. Excuse me?

JOHN. Misslehouse.

*(***BOBBIE** *has a pained look on her face.)*

BOBBIE. One moment.

*(***BOBBIE** *picks up the phone on the intercom rather than*

pushing the intercom button. The phone rings in **ELEANOR***'s office.* **ELEANOR** *snatches up the phone.)*

ELEANOR. What are you doing? You know I hate the phone.

*(***ELEANOR** *slams down the receiver.* **BOBBIE** *smiles weakly at* **JOHN** *and crosses to the door to* **ELEANOR***'s office, taking the Misslehouse memo with her.* **BOBBIE** *taps lightly on the door)*

What?!

BOBBIE. *(Entering the office and closing the door behind her)* John Misslehouse is here to see you.

ELEANOR. Who?

BOBBIE. *(Showing* **ELEANOR** *the memo.)* From Misslehouse Industrials.

ELEANOR. *(Lighting up with a smile.)* Perfect. Lay it on him.

BOBBIE. But…are you sure?

ELEANOR. Shall I compose another one? For you?

BOBBIE. No, Ma'am. It's just…

ELEANOR. Give him the letter, Cratchit.

BOBBIE. It's Christmas Eve.

ELEANOR. Do it!

*(***BOBBIE** *slowly walks back into the reception area. She smiles weakly at* **JOHN**. **ELEANOR** *crosses to her door and opens it a crack so she can watch* **BOBBIE** *and* **JOHN**. *She smiles with anticipation.)*

BOBBIE. Ms. Scrooge apologizes that she is unable to see you. But…well…she asked me to give you this.

*(***BOBBIE** *hands* **JOHN** *the document.* **JOHN** *reads it. He looks at* **BOBBIE** *in disbelief and then charges toward* **ELEANOR***'s office.* **ELEANOR** *rushes back to her chair.* **BOBBIE** *tries to stop* **JOHN**.*)*

Sir!

*(***JOHN** *rushes into* **ELEANOR***'s office.)*

ELEANOR. Excuse me?!

JOHN. What the hell…?

ELEANOR. How dare you storm into my…?

JOHN. *(Holding up letter.)* You can't do this.

ELEANOR. *(Calmly.)* No?

JOHN. This isn't legal.

ELEANOR. Sure it is.

JOHN. This is my company.

ELEANOR. Not anymore.

JOHN. You had no right. Marley assured me that he would never…

ELEANOR. Marley's history.

JOHN. Doesn't matter. He promised…

ELEANOR. *(Rises and snatches the memo from* **JOHN**.*)* Jacob Marley was a business man, Misslehouse. This is business. He would have done the same thing. You put shares up for sale and I bought them.

JOHN. But…

ELEANOR. You play with fire, you're going to get burned.

JOHN. Now, see here, I…

ELEANOR. People can be divided into three groups, Misslehouse. Those who make things happen. Those who watch things happen. And those who wonder what happened. Which do you think you are?

JOHN. Well…

ELEANOR. *(***ELEANOR** *signs the memo and hands it back to* **JOHN.***)*

Enjoy the view.

JOHN. My gramps built this company from the ground up. He gave his life to make it happen. Started from a cabin with a tin roof.

*(***ELEANOR** *pretends like she is interested.)*

In Kalamazoo. Had the water pumped up from a fresh water creek. I'll never forget, on my eighteenth birthday, my pop handed me keys, put his arm around me and said..

ELEANOR. Blah. Blahbitty. Blah. Save it for Hallmark. I have things to do.

JOHN. You've stolen my name.

ELEANOR. I'm changing the name. It's dull and uninspired.

JOHN. How dare you…?

ELEANOR. And I didn't steal it. I bought it. Now if you'll excuse me.

*(***ELEANOR** *goes back to her computer.)*

JOHN. I'll fight you. All the way to the supreme court if I have to.

ELEANOR. That could be expensive. Better have Gramps build another shack.

JOHN. *(Shaking his head in disbelief.)* Everything they said about you is true.

ELEANOR. "They" are jealous. Amateurs. Like you, Mistletoe.

JOHN. This is only the beginning. You will get the justice you deserve.

ELEANOR. Such drama.

JOHN. You haven't heard the last of me.

ELEANOR. Oh, goodie.

*(***JOHN** *rushes for the door, passing* **BOBBIE**. **JOHN** *crashes into* **PHIL,** *who enters the office.* **JOHN** *tries to pull himself together but is on the verge of a panic attack. He stumbles out.)*

JOHN. Sorry.

PHIL. That's alright. You okay?

*(***ELEANOR** *watches* **JOHN** *out, calling to him as he exits.)*

ELEANOR. Happy holidays!

*(***ELEANOR** *laughs devilishly. Her smiles abruptly disappears when she sees* **PHIL**. **PHIL** *holds a Christmas tin of cookies with a bow on top.)*

ELEANOR. Phillip? What are you doing here?

PHIL. Hey, Aunt Eleanor.

*(***ELEANOR** *frowns. She hates being called "Aunt."* **PHIL** *walks up to her and kisses her on the cheek.* **ELEANOR** *squirms.)*

PHIL. How are you?

ELEANOR. Busy. What do you want?

PHIL. I wanted to invite you over tomorrow. For Christmas dinner.

ELEANOR. I'm working.

(To **BOBBIE***.)*

Some people are more dedicated to this company than others.

*(***ELEANOR** *re-enters her office.* **PHIL** *follows.)*

PHIL. On Christmas?

ELEANOR. It's a Thursday, Phillip.

PHIL. So take off early. Carla bought a huge turkey. It will take hours to…

ELEANOR. Thank you, but I have to finish a proposal.

*(***ELEANOR** *shouts out to* **BOBBIE***.)*

Because I have to do it myself, it will take all day and likely half the night.

PHIL. Well, what about tonight? For drinks. We're having a few people…

*(***ELEANOR** *begins to close her door.)*

You haven't seen Carla since the wedding. She made her special cookies, just for you.

(He puts the Christmas tin on her desk.)

ELEANOR. Some other time.

PHIL. How's Sunday?

ELEANOR. Check my calendar.

*(***ELEANOR** *gestures to* **BOBBIE***.)*

PHIL. Okay. Well, Merry…

*(***ELEANOR** *closes her door. To himself.)*

…Christmas.

BOBBIE. Merry Christmas, Phil.

*(***PHIL** *smiles at* **BOBBIE** *and crosses to her desk.* **ELEANOR** *opens the tin and holds up a cookie. It is burned.)*

PHIL. How's it going, Bobbie?

BOBBIE. Good. Thanks.

PHIL. Why don't you join us tomorrow? I'm telling you this turkey is huge…What do you say?

BOBBIE. Thanks. That's very sweet, but…well…Tim…he… it's tough…with the snow.

PHIL. How is he?

BOBBIE. Great.

*(***BOBBIE** *smiles awkwardly. She looks down.* **ELEANOR** *throws* **PHIL***'s cookie tin in the trash.)*

PHIL. Well, you're welcome anytime. Consider it an open invite.

BOBBIE. Let's check that schedule, huh?

*(***BOBBIE** *opens the appointment calendar.* **ELEANOR** *picks up the receiver and dials.* **BOBBIE***'s intercom phone rings. To* **PHIL***:)*

BOBBIE. Excuse me.

*(***BOBBIE** *picks up the receiver.* **PHIL** *unwraps a Christmas chocolate "kiss" from a bowl on* **BOBBIE***'s desk and pops it in his mouth.)*

ELEANOR. Get rid of him.

*(***BOBBIE** *picks up the receiver.)*

BOBBIE. But, Ma'am, are you sure you don't…?

ELEANOR. What have I taught you about loyalty?

BOBBIE. Ma'am?

ELEANOR. Loyalty, Cratchit.

BOBBIE. Uh…a dog will never bite the hand that leads it?

ELEANOR. No.

BOBBIE. That needs it?

ELEANOR. Wrong.

BOBBIE. That heeds it?

*(***ELEANOR** *makes a buzzer sound.)*

I'm sorry, Ma'am. I'm afraid I don't quite remember that one.

ELEANOR. Should I print you out another copy of the list?

BOBBIE. Yes…No! It won't happen again.

*(***ELEANOR** *hangs up on* **BOBBIE**. **BOBBIE** *looks at* **PHIL**, *still holding the receiver.)*

Oh…Of course, glad I could be of help…No, thank you.

(Bobbie hangs up the phone.)

PHIL. So, how's Sunday for the ole battle ax?

BOBBIE. Booked.

PHIL. Friday?

BOBBIE. Booked.

PHIL. Saturday?

BOBBIE. No.

PHIL. Next Sunday?

*(***BOBBIE** *shakes her head "no."* **ELEANOR** *turns her intercom button on, stands, and listens in on the conversation between* **BOBBIE** *and* **PHIL.***)*

Next week?

*(***BOBBIE** *shakes her head "no.")*

That was her, wasn't it? Telling you to give me the 'ole heave Ho Ho Ho.

*(***BOBBIE** *looks down again.)*

PHIL. It's alright. I'm getting used to it.

*(***PHIL** *crosses to the thermostat.)*

It's freezing in here. The heat busted?

*(***PHIL** *reaches his hand toward the thermostat.)*

BOBBIE. NO! It's…she likes it cold.

*(**BOBBIE** runs over to **PHIL** to stop him.)*

PHIL. God bless you. I don't know how you do it.

BOBBIE. She has…some good traits.

PHIL. Yeah? Tell me one, would you? So I can let my wife know…just one.

BOBBIE. She's…She's uh…

PHIL. I'm listening.

BOBBIE. She's…She's very…

*(**PHIL** laughs and crosses to **BOBBIE**. He kisses her on the cheek.)*

PHIL. I'll see ya.

*(**BOBBIE** nods. **PHIL** crosses to the door.)*

Tell Snow Miser Merry Christmas for me. And give Timmy my best.

BOBBIE. I will.

*(**ELEANOR** switches off the intercom button, angrily.)*

PHIL. Bobbie, if you ever need anything, anything at all, don't hesitate…

BOBBIE. Thanks.

PHIL. I could take him to a Giants game! Anytime he wants. My boss has great seats. Smack down on the fifty yard line…

*(**ELEANOR** dials the phone. It rings on **BOBBIE**'s desk.)*

Right.

*(**PHIL** smiles and exits. **BOBBIE** slowly picks up the receiver.)*

ELEANOR. My office. Now.

*(**ELEANOR** slams down the receiver. **BOBBIE** lowers the receiver and slowly crosses into **ELEANOR**'s office.)*

ELEANOR. Do you enjoy working here, Cratchit?

BOBBIE. Yes, Ma'am. Of course.

ELEANOR. Why?

BOBBIE. Ma'am?

ELEANOR. You do realize I have invested a great deal of time and resources into making you what you are today? Wisdom does not come cheap.

BOBBIE. Yes, Ma'am…no, Ma'am. I'm…honored.

ELEANOR. People would kill for this kind of education…dedication.

BOBBIE. I'm sure. I'm very thankful, Ma'am. To have you as my boss…my mentor.

ELEANOR. Are you?

BOBBIE. Ma'am?

ELEANOR. Thankful. To be saddled with a…a…snow miser?

BOBBIE. *(Realizing* **ELEANOR** *was eavesdropping)* No, Ma'am… You are not…you are…you…

ELEANOR. Yes?

BOBBIE. You are…such a hard worker.

ELEANOR. Uh-huh.

BOBBIE. And a master of motivational speaking.

ELEANOR. Go on.

BOBBIE. A dynamic business woman.

*(***ELEANOR** *laughs.)*

ELEANOR. True.

BOBBIE. The Queen of Wall Street.

ELEANOR. Queen. I like that.

BOBBIE. You're a financial wizard.

ELEANOR. Well.

BOBBIE. A genius, really.

*(***ELEANOR** *nods)*

And when they invite you to ring the opening bell…which they will very soon…I will be there…cheering you on…wishing you everything that you deserve.

*(***ELEANOR** *looks at* **BOBBIE**. **BOBBIE** *quickly rebounds.)*

You put the Dow in Jones, the stock in market, the must in buy. You are the most evil-tempered woman I have ever known.

*(***ELEANOR** *glares at* **BOBBIE**.*)*

Even. Even-tempered.

*(***BOBBIE** *turns to leave and crashes into* **ELEANOR***'s desk, sending her cup of pens flying.* **BOBBIE** *crawls on the floor and picks up the pens. She reaches up and feels around for the pen cup. She mistakenly grabs* **ELEANOR***'s take-out coffee cup, rises, puts the pens in the cup and hands the cup to* **ELEANOR**. **ELEANOR** *slowly takes it and pulls the pens out as* **BOBBIE** *watches. Coffee drips from the bottom of the pens. Petrified,* **BOBBIE** *smiles awkwardly.)*

ELEANOR. Lock the door!

*(***BOBBIE** *runs out of* **ELEANOR***'s office and crosses to the door. She begins to close it when* **SARAH** *and* **BEN** *enter, with a Christmas boot they use to collect donations.* **ELEANOR** *exits into her bathroom with the pens.)*

SARAH/BEN. Happy Holidays!

BOBBIE. *(Quietly.)* Happy Holidays.

SARAH. Is this the office of Marley, Scrooge and Associates?

BOBBIE. Scrooge, Inc. and…

(Bobbie holds up her hand.)

Associate.

BEN. Is Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley available?

BOBBIE. Mr. Marley recently…passed on. And Ms. Scrooge is not…

SARAH. My name is Sarah. And this is Ben.

*(***BEN** *nods, smiles.)*

BEN. We're volunteers for the Manhattan Coalition for Humanity.

*(***BOBBIE** *enters from her bathroom, wiping the pens off with a paper towel. She puts the pens back in the proper*

cup. She grabs the coffee cup and heads to the trash can to throw it out.)

SARAH/BEN. Homeless helpers!

BEN. At this time of year…

SARAH. With temperatures hovering around the freezing point…

BEN. The homeless population is facing a daily struggle for survival.

ELEANOR. *(Hearing something. Into intercom.)* Cratchit?

*(***BOBBIE** *tries to get back to her desk, but* **SARAH** *and* **BEN** *block her path.)*

SARAH. It is up to our citizens…

BOBBIE. *(Trying to get to her intercom.)* …excuse me…

BEN. The leaders of our fair city…

ELEANOR. Cratchit, are you there?

SARAH. To ensure that these unfortunate souls have the support they need to…

BOBBIE. I really have to…

ELEANOR. *(Flinging open her office door.)* Cratchit!

*(***SARAH** *and* **BEN** *abruptly stop talking.)*

SARAH. Is that Ms. Scrooge?

*(***BOBBIE** *nods "yes."* **SARAH** *and* **BEN** *quickly cross to Eleanor.)*

SARAH/BEN. Happy Holidays!

ELEANOR. Cratchit?

SARAH. My name is Sarah. And this is Ben.

*(***BEN** *nods, smiles)*

BEN. We're volunteers for the Manhattan Coalition for Humanity.

SARAH/BEN. Homeless helpers!

BEN. At this time of year…

SARAH. With temperatures hovering around the freezing point…

BEN. The homeless population is facing a daily struggle for survival.

ELEANOR. Get out.

SARAH. It is up to our citizens…

BEN. The leaders of our fair city…

ELEANOR. Out!

SARAH. But…Ms. Scrooge, we need you.

BEN. Your donation will go toward helping the HHF…

SARAH. Homeless Helper Foundation.

BEN. …build a permanent center for the homeless.

SARAH. Right here in Manhattan.

BEN. To provide a shelter.

SARAH. A warm place.

BEN. A safe place.

SARAH/BEN. To sleep.

ELEANOR. Subways are warm.

SARAH. It's Christmas.

ELEANOR. Represented by a demented fat man in velvet. If Cringle was my client, I would advise him to ditch the elves, eat the deer, and have his toys made in China.

*(***BEN** *and* **SARAH** *look stunned.)*

So.

(To **SARAH***)*

Go.

(To **BEN***)*

So I can work.

(To **SARAH***)*

And forget.

(To **BEN***)*

That you.

(To **SARAH***)*

Ever.

(To **BEN***)*

Were here.

*(***SARAH** *smiles and holds out the Christmas boot for a donation.* **ELEANOR** *pours the contents of her take-out coffee into the boot.* **SARAH** *begins to cry.)*

Oh, for god's sake. Cratchit, call security.

*(***ELEANOR** *exits into her office, slamming the door behind her.* **BEN** *leads* **SARAH** *to the door.)*

BOBBIE. Hold on.

*(***BOBBIE** *grabs her change purse and fishes through it for some change but it is empty. She slowly unwraps her scarf from her neck and hands it to* **BEN***.)*

It's not much, but take it. Please.

*(***BEN** *takes the scarf.)*

BEN. Bless you.

*(***BEN** *smiles at* **BOBBIE** *and exits with* **SARAH***.* **BOBBIE** *locks the door. She crosses back to her chair and sits, shivering.)*

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Is the door locked?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Yes, Ma'am.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* This is not the Red Cross, Cratchit. It's bad enough there are beggars, now there are beggars' beggars? You should know better. God only knows where that boot has been. Charities are the scourge of modern civilization.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Yes, Ma'am.

(A beat.)

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* I suppose you want the whole day off tomorrow?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* If at all possible.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* The deadline for the Newman merger is firm, Cratchit. If we lose the deal, I may have to downsize.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* I'll get here early on Friday.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* Good.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* 7:30?

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* 7:00.

BOBBIE. *(***BOBBIE** *picks up a framed picture of* **TIMMY**. *Into intercom.)* Ma'am?

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* What?

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Well…about my health insurance. The HMO won't cover a procedure that Tim's doctor is recommending. It's very expensive. I think it could really help him to…

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* You want a raise.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Or an upgrade in coverage. I would greatly appreciate it, ma'am. It could make all the…

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* This is not a good time, Bobbie.

BOBBIE. An advance against my future earnings?

ELEANOR. The market could take a bad turn at any time. It's very volatile. You know that as well as anyone. She who gets fat on the feast suffers most in the famine.

BOBBIE. Yes, Ma'am.

(A beat. **BOBBIE** *wants to respond but thinks better of it. She packs her briefcase again.)*

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom.)* I'll see you at 7 a.m. on Friday… Sharp.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Good night.

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom)* Turn out the reception lights.

BOBBIE. *(Into intercom.)* Shall I wait to walk you out?

ELEANOR. *(Into intercom, with her feet up on the desk, flipping through a Forbes magazine.)*

I'm working, Roberta. I have way too much to do to leave. Especially now that you're deserting me.

*(***BOBBIE** *finishes packing up and struggles to carry the overstuffed briefcase to the door.)*

Turn the thermostat back down.

*(***BOBBIE** *crosses to the door. She turns out the lights in her area. The lights stay on in* **ELEANOR***'s office.* **BOBBIE** *considers. She crosses back to the intercom.)*

BOBBIE. *(With a devilish grin. Into intercom.)* Merry Christmas, Eleanor!

ELEANOR. *(Rises quickly. Into intercom.)* Double-lock the doors!

*(***BOBBIE** *exits, double-locking the doors with her keys from outside the door.* **ELEANOR** *picks up her phone and dials an extension.)*

Hello? Where's Sanders?…Of course. Who are you? Sven? Well, Sven, this is…right. Don't let anyone up to the 16th floor. I'm working late…I'll be fine…Yes… Whatever.

*(***ELEANOR***'s phone rings. She picks it up.)*

ELEANOR. Hello?

(There is no response. She hangs up the phone. The phone rings in **BOBBIE***'s office.* **ELEANOR** *crosses to the door. She turns on the light and crosses to* **BOBBIE***'s desk. She picks up the phone)*

ELEANOR. Hello?!

(There is no response. **ELEANOR** *hangs up the phone. She crosses back to her door and turns off the light to* **BOBBIE***'s area. The front door buzzer goes off.* **ELEANOR** *turns the light back on. There is no one there. A beat.* **ELEANOR** *turns the light off. She re-enters her office and closes the door. The sound of loud stock market bells.* **ELEANOR** *jumps in fright.* **ELEANOR** *rings the small miniature bell on her desk (a completely different sound/ tone) She slowly sits at her desk and picks up the phone receiver. She dials the front desk on level 1.)*

ELEANOR. Sven?…Where's Sven?…I just spoke with him… Are you leaving, too?…Good. Is there something wrong with the phones?…The power?…Nevermind!

*(***ELEANOR** *hangs up the phone. She starts working on her computer. There is a tapping on the window behind her.* **ELEANOR** *slowly crosses to the window. Tapping continues.* **ELEANOR** *opens the blinds.* **MARLEY** *appears. He smiles and waves at* **ELEANOR**, *who screams and leaps back. She quickly lowers the blinds. A beat.* **ELEANOR** *slowly raises the blinds.* **MARLEY** *is gone.* **ELEANOR** *moves close to the window and looks out. She slowly lowers the blinds and flops down into her chair. She picks up the phone and dials an extension.)*

I need a triple expresso with a double shot on the 16th floor…Eleanor Scrooge…What do you mean you can't leave the desk?…Well, then, send somebody up…How can you be the only security person left? There's fifty floors in this building…I know what night it is!

*(***ELEANOR** *slams down the phone. She goes back to her computer, mumbling to herself.* **MARLEY** *comes through the wall in* **ELEANOR***'s office and leans over her, watching her work on the computer.)*

MARLEY. Don't hold. Sell. Dump it all.

*(***ELEANOR** *slowly turns around and looks at* **MARLEY**. *She screams.* **MARLEY** *jumps back, holding his ears.* **ELEANOR** *backs away from the desk.)*

Oww! For god's sake, El.

ELEANOR. Jacob?

MARLEY. *(Looking around)* What did you do with my Queen Ann Desk?

(He taps on her desk.)

This isn't even real wood.

ELEANOR. What are you doing here?

MARLEY. No "how's it going"? "I missed you"? "Hostile takeovers aren't nearly as much fun since you left?"

ELEANOR. I'm dreaming. This is a nightmare.

MARLEY. A nightmare? So now I'm a nightmare? That's gratitude.

ELEANOR. This isn't happening.

MARLEY. Oh, it's happening. At least you kept my chair.

*(***MARLEY** *sits in the desk chair and stares at the computer.)*

Why are you buying more of this stock? It's going to go bust after New Year's.

ELEANOR. Really?

MARLEY. Completely bankrupt. Will make Enron look like a must-buy.

ELEANOR. *(No longer afraid.)* You're kidding?

MARLEY. *(Shakes his head.)* Consider it insider information.

ELEANOR. How…how do you know?

MARLEY. I know all kinds of new things, El. They keep us very up to speed on current events.

ELEANOR. Are you…an angel?

MARLEY. No such luck.

(He bows his head and leans into **ELEANOR**.*)*

See 'em?

ELEANOR. See what?

MARLEY. Feel around…go ahead.

*(***ELEANOR** *slowly runs her fingers over* **MARLEY***'s head.* **ELEANOR** *feels his horns, gasps, quickly pulls her hand away.)*

Nice, huh? They're just starting to come in. Takes a while.

*(***MARLEY** *scratches his head.)*

Except they've been itching me like crazy lately.

*(***ELEANOR** *is mortified.)*

ELEANOR. Am I…dead, Marley?

MARLEY. No. At least not in the traditional sense. But I got to tell you, there's not much holding your soul into place.

ELEANOR. Are you here to take me…down?

MARLEY. I can't. I don't have that clout. And you don't want to go, trust me. I'm low man on the totem pole. Have to spend eternity as an intern.

*(***ELEANOR** *gasps.)*

Making coffee, emptying trash, licking envelopes. And the boss hates me. I can't do anything right. They'll send somebody else. With a diversified portfolio and a slew of dedicated clients.

(He touches his head.)

And bigger horns.

ELEANOR. But I don't want to be an intern. Not again.

MARLEY. It's not up to me, Kid. Tell it to your advisors.

ELEANOR. Advisors?

MARLEY. Spirits. Three of them. They'll be stopping by later.

*(***MARLEY** *smiles.)*

To haunt you.

*(***MARLEY** *walks into* **BOBBIE***'s area and snaps his finger, lighting up the area.)*

My god, Eleanor, where'd you get this crap? The salvation army?

(He sees the "And Marley" crossed out on the front door.)

Oh, nice. Real nice.

ELEANOR. *(Following him.)* What am I supposed to do?

MARLEY. You got one chance to seal the deal, Eleanor. Remember the golden be's?

ELEANOR. Be cool. Be calm. Be…Be…Be…

MARLEY. Be quiet! Listen for a change. Don't blow it like you did that Wordsworth Consortium deal.

ELEANOR. I did not blow it, Jacob. That deal was dead before I even sat at the table. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. He who hesitates is lost. It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the

size of the fight in…

MARLEY. Don't! Stop it, right now! Save the Scroogisms for your clients. I can't take it.

ELEANOR. I thought you liked them?

MARLEY. You pull out one those tonight and you're toast. You understand?

ELEANOR. Jacob. You mean to tell me all those years…

MARLEY. Shhh. I said to listen, Eleanor.

(Shakes his head.)

Gotta go.

ELEANOR. Wait! Who…what…when…where…?

MARLEY. You got about a minute. Use it wisely.

ELEANOR. What should I do?

MARLEY. You pray?

ELEANOR. What??

MARLEY. Call someone you love.

*(***ELEANOR** *gives him a blank look.)*

Relative?

*(***ELEANOR** *gives him another look.)*

Friend?

*(***ELEANOR** *glares at him.)*

Right. Let's have a drink.

(He quickly begins opening and closing drawers.)

Where's my bottle of Royal Salute?

*(***ELEANOR** *shrugs sheepishly.)*

You hocked it, didn't you? With my furniture.

ELEANOR. *(Lying)* Of course not.

MARLEY. Okay, Kid. The odds don't look good.

(Patting her on the arm.)

But do your best.

*(***MARLEY** *starts for the closet.)*

ELEANOR. Jacob, I'm afraid.

MARLEY. You? Afraid? Come on.

*(***MARLEY** *crosses to the closet.)*

ELEANOR. Hold on. What's your angle?

MARLEY. Angle? I'm just looking out for your best interests.

*(***ELEANOR** *doesn't buy it.* **MARLEY** *smiles and holds open his arms.)*

I've missed you, Kid.

*(***ELEANOR** *glares at* **MARLEY**. **MARLEY** *drops the ruse.)*

Alright, it's like this…if you can change your destiny, I have a chance to be re-assigned. Otherwise, there's eight million more boxes of envelopes with my name on them. So, please, be on your game today? No words of wisdom, for god's sake. And sell that stock. It's crap.

*(***ELEANOR** *rushes to her computer.* **MARLEY** *opens the closet door and takes a final look.)*

God, I miss the cold.

*(***MARLEY** *exits into the closet.)*

ELEANOR. Jacob?

*(***ELEANOR** *rushes to the closet door and flings it open. There is no one inside.)*

Jacob?

*(***ELEANOR** *backs away. She sits in her chair, rubbing her eyes. She looks around.)*

Hello? Anyone there?

(No response.)

Spirits. Ha!

(She begins typing frantically [she's selling, just in case]. There is a buzzer at the front door to the reception area. **ELEANOR** *cowers in her chair. There is another buzzer [longer].* **ELEANOR** *slowly opens the door to her office and turns the light on to the reception area.* **ELEANOR**

sees a young man through the glass door. She breathes a sigh of relief and crosses to the door, unlocking both locks. She opens the door.)

ELEANOR. Well?

PAST. Excuse me?

ELEANOR. Where is it?

*(***PAST** *looks blankly at* **ELEANOR**.*)*

My expresso!

*(***PAST** *looks blankly at* **ELEANOR**.*)*

Oh, I can see as per usual they get only the really bright ones to work the holidays.

PAST. You got to be Eleanor Scrooge.

ELEANOR. *(Steps back)* How dare you address me by my first name? You grunts on the night shift think you can get away with anything.

*(***PAST** *walks into the office. He looks around.)*

ELEANOR. What is the name of your supervisor?

PAST. You don't know him.

ELEANOR. I will by tomorrow morning, I assure you. And you'll be out of a job.

*(***PAST** *laughs.* **ELEANOR** *is appalled.)*

Get out.

*(***ELEANOR** *crosses to the door and opens it.)*

I said to get out.

PAST. You're wasting valuable time, Eleanor.

ELEANOR. Now!

*(***PAST** *smiles and walks out.* **ELEANOR** *shuts the door and double-locks it.)*

PAST. You can't keep me away.

ELEANOR. No? No one has a key to that top lock but me and my assistant.

*(***ELEANOR** *storms back to her office door. She turns and*

looks at **PAST**, *who is still standing at the glass door.)*

You're fired.

*(***ELEANOR** *smiles.)*

Happy Holidays!

*(***ELEANOR** *shuts off the light to the reception area. She enters her office and locks the door. She sits at her desk and picks up the phone. She dials a number from her Rolodex.)*

John Westbrook, please…Well, wake him up…I know what night it is!

*(***PAST** *walks through the wall just upstage of the glass door and walks through the darkness towards* **ELEANOR***'s office.* **ELEANOR** *swivels her chair as she talks on the phone so that she is looking out the window. She does not see* **PAST** *walk through the wall, upstage of her door.)*

ELEANOR. Tell him it's Ms. Scrooge from the 16th floor. That will get him out of bed. Scrooge. S-C-R-double O-G-E…Listen, Sweetie: either wake him up or let him sleep all week 'cause he won't have a job to go to… Thank you.

*(***PAST** *sits in a chair and watches* **ELEANOR***.)*

Westbrook. It's Scrooge…Yeah, well, it *is* an emergency. One of your rejects just verbally assaulted me…Yes. I think it's Ben…or Len…or Ken. He's Oriental.

PAST. Asian.

ELEANOR. About 5'10."

PAST. 6'.

ELEANOR. 6'. I don't know. Maybe twenty-four, twenty-five.

PAST. Five hundred and eighty two.

ELEANOR. Five hundred and…

(It sinks in. **ELEANOR** *looks at* **PAST***. He waves.* **ELEANOR** *dives under the desk.)*

PAST. *(In* **ELEANOR***'s voice)* Westbrook?…No, false alarm. I

guess I shouldn't mix my medications. It's just there's *sooo* many to manage.

*(***ELEANOR** *peaks her head up and gasps.)*

Sorry to disturb you…Why don't you order watches for you and your men…from Cartier…any style you want. Charge it to my account…Yes, see you Tuesday. Unless I check myself into Betty Ford. Aloha!

*(***PAST** *hangs up the receiver.)*

ELEANOR. Are you…my advisor?

PAST. More of a guide.

ELEANOR. Your name isn't Ken, is it?

PAST. *(Shakes his head.)* Past.

ELEANOR. Pest?

PAST. Past! Your past, Eleanor. Or should I call you Ellie?

ELEANOR. *(Slowly rises.)* No one has called me that in…

PAST. Twenty years?

ELEANOR. *(Shocked.)* How did you…?

*(***PAST** *walks through the wall. He sticks his head back into the office.)*

PAST. Come on.

*(***ELEANOR** *hesitates.)*

Let's go.

*(***ELEANOR** *comes through the door and joins* **PAST** *in the area downstage of the office.* **PAST** *snaps his fingers and the lights come up on the area [different lights than before] and out on* **ELEANOR***'s office.* **ROBERT** *stands holding a Christmas tree. He checks his watch.)*

ELEANOR. Robert!

*(***ELEANOR** *rushes to* **ROBERT**. **ROBERT** *does not react to her.)*

Robert? He can't hear me.

PAST. You think?

(Tug, a vendor enters.)

TUG. We're closing up. You want the tree or not?

ROBERT. Just a few more minutes, please. I promised my girlfriend we'd pick it out together.

TUG. You got five.

(Tug walks off. **ROBERT** *looks at his watch again. He holds up the tree and smiles.* **ELLIE** *rushes in.)*

ELLIE. Robert?

*(***ROBERT** *turns and sees* **ELLIE**. *She rushes into his arms and they embrace.)*

ELEANOR. That's…

PAST/ELEANOR. You./Me.

ELLIE. Sorry I'm late. Mr. Marley needed a report that couldn't wait. A merger. It would mean big things for the company, Robert. Great things.

ROBERT. It's okay.

(He holds up the tree.)

You like it?

ELLIE. I do. Very much. Let's take it home and decorate it.

ROBERT. Now? It's ten o'clock.

ELLIE. I don't care. I love Christmas, Robert.

ROBERT. I love you.

(They kiss.)

ELLIE. Come on.

(They start off with the tree.)

ROBERT. *(Laughs)* Wait. I have to pay for it.

ELLIE. Let's make a run for it.

ROBERT. What? Ellie.

ELLIE. Chicken.

ROBERT. You're bad.

ELLIE. *(Smiles)* You have no idea.

ROBERT. I have a surprise for you.

ELLIE. What is it?

ROBERT. You have to wait until Christmas.

*(***ELLIE** *tickles* **ROBERT**.*)*

ELLIE. What is it?

*(***ROBERT** *pulls away [he's very ticklish].)*

ROBERT. You have to wait, Ellie.

ELLIE. But I don't want to.

ROBERT. It's only a week.

*(***TUG** *enters.)*

TUG. The girlfriend?

ROBERT. Yes.

TUG. So?

ROBERT. We'll take it.

TUG. Terrific.

*(***ROBERT** *hands* **TUG** *a few bills.)*

ELLIE. It's a beautiful tree.

TUG. Gorgeous.

*(***TUG** *starts off.)*

ELLIE. Wait.

*(***TUG** *stops and looks at* **ELLIE** *impatiently.* **ELLIE** *takes a small candy cane from her purse and hands it to* **TUG**.*)*

Merry Christmas.

*(***TUG** *looks at* **ELLIE** *as if she is insane.* **ELLIE** *takes* **ROBERT** *by the hand and they joyfully exit with the tree.* **TUG** *exits via the opposite side of stage.)*

ELEANOR. Can I talk to him?

PAST. Nope.

ELEANOR. Just for a minute?

PAST. 'Fraid not.

ELEANOR. Please.

PAST. Why? What would you say? Absence makes the heart grow fonder?

ELEANOR. I don't talk like that.

PAST. Oh, no? Marley was right. You're like a bad fortune cookie.

ELEANOR. What is the point of this? I have work to do.

PAST. Listen.

*(***PAST** *snaps his fingers again. The lights shift on the same area.* **TESS** *is wheeled in by a nurse.)*

TESS. By the window, please.

(The nurse wheels **TESS** *to an area where a window light spills through.)*

Thank you.

(The nurse exits. **ELEANOR** *rushes to* **TESS**. *She kneels by the wheelchair.)*

ELEANOR. Tess? Tess?

PAST. She can't hear you.

ELEANOR. Oh, Tess. I've missed you. I've missed you so much.

*(***ELEANOR** *hugs* **TESS**. **TESS** *does not react, continuing to look out the window.* **ELEANOR** *slowly releases her and backs away.* **YOUNG PHIL** *rushes in.)*

YOUNG PHIL. Look, Mama.

(He hands **TESS** *a Christmas card.)*

ELEANOR. Phillip?

YOUNG PHIL. I made this. For Aunt Ellie.

*(***PAST** *crosses to* **ELEANOR** *and gently pulls her away.)*

TESS. Oh, honey. It's beautiful.

YOUNG PHIL. The nurse helped me a little.

TESS. It's the best Christmas card I've ever seen.

YOUNG PHIL. You think Aunt Ellie will like it?

TESS. She'll love it.

YOUNG PHIL. Where is she going to take me?

TESS. I don't know. Somewhere fun, I'm sure.

YOUNG PHIL. Can we go sledding?

TESS. Maybe. You'll have to ask her.

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *hugs* **TESS***.)*

YOUNG PHIL. I wish you could go.

TESS. I know, sweetheart.

(Overwhelmed, **ELEANOR** *starts back toward her office.)*

PAST. You can't run away from your past, Eleanor. You have to face it.

*(***ELEANOR** *turns and rejoins Past.)*

YOUNG PHIL. Should I wrap it?

TESS. Sure. Get Nurse Laura to help you, okay?

YOUNG PHIL. Okay!

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *rushes off happily.* **TESS** *looks out the window.* **ELLIE** *enters.)*

ELLIE. Sorry. The office is insane. We just got a lead on…

TESS. You scared me. I didn't think you were coming.

ELLIE. Why? I know I'm a little late, but…

TESS. Phillip is really looking forward to this.

ELLIE. Hey, guess what? I found a great new doctor I want you to see. He's out of Boston.

TESS. Ellie.

ELLIE. He is supposed to be the best. Jacob says he's at the forefront of…

TESS. I have a doctor.

ELLIE. Not like this one.

TESS. I trust him.

ELLIE. Yeah, well, be leery of loyalty and suspicious of sincerity.

*(***PAST** *sighs, shaking his head.)*

TESS. Stop it…

ELLIE. At least let me schedule an appointment.

TESS. Listen to me.

ELLIE. What do you have to…

TESS. Listen to me! Please…Mom wants to adopt Phillip.

ELLIE. Adopt him? Why?

TESS. Ellie. It's time.

*(***TESS** *takes* **ELLIE***'s hand.)*

I want him to be with you. And Robert.

ELLIE. I don't understand.

TESS. He'd be an excellent father, Ellie.

*(***ELLIE** *gently pulls away.)*

Mom's too old to be raising children.

ELLIE. What would it hurt to meet with Doctor Henry? Just meet with him, please.

*(***MARLEY** *enters, sporting a mustache.)*

MARLEY. El?

*(***ELEANOR** *turns to* **MARLEY**. **MARLEY** *points to his watch.)*

ELEANOR. Go away!

TESS. What is he…?

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *rushes in.)*

YOUNG PHIL. Aunt Ellie!

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *rushes into* **ELLIE***'s arms.)*

ELLIE. Hi! How's my favorite nephew?

YOUNG PHIL. *(Laughing.)* I'm your only nephew, silly.

ELLIE. Well, you're worth two nephews. At least.

YOUNG PHIL. I made something for you.

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *presents* **ELLIE** *with the wrapped card.)*

ELLIE. Thank you.

MARLEY. Eleanor. We're going to be late.

*(***ELLIE** *rises and puts the card in her purse without looking at it.)*

YOUNG PHIL. Can we go sledding today?

ELLIE. Well, I'm not really dressed for sledding. Maybe next time, okay?

YOUNG PHIL. So, what are we going to do?

ELLIE. Well…Actually, I have a meeting I have to got to for a few hours. But…I'll be back by six.

MARLEY. Seven.

ELLIE. Seven at the latest.

(Phil looks at **TESS***.)*

I promise…

*(***ELLIE** *looks at* **TESS***.)*

I promise.

*(***TESS** *looks away.)*

I'll tell you what. I'll take you to the mall, okay, and we'll buy you any present you want.

YOUNG PHIL. Really? Any one I want?

MARLEY. For god's sake. Give the kid a twenty and let's go.

ELLIE. Any one you want.

*(***ELLIE** *kisses* **YOUNG PHIL** *on the cheek. She reaches over to kiss* **TESS***, but* **TESS** *pulls her head away.)*

I'll see you later, okay?

YOUNG PHIL. Okay.

ELLIE. Here.

(She hands **TESS** *a business card.)*

It's Doctor Henry's card. Call him, okay?

*(***ELLIE** *starts out. She turns back to* **TESS***.)*

I'll give you an answer when I get back. Okay?

TESS. I have my answer.

*(***ELLIE** *looks at* **TESS** *for a moment and then exits with* **MARLEY***.)*

YOUNG PHIL. Where'd she go?

TESS. Get my coat.

(She struggles to get out of the wheelchair.)

ELEANOR. No! Don't go.

YOUNG PHIL. Really?

TESS. Really. Take this with you.

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *gets in front of the wheelchair.)*

Put it in the bedroom and shut the door.

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *starts out.)*

Quietly, okay? Don't let Nurse Laura see you.

YOUNG PHIL. *(Whispers)* Okay.

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *wheels off the chair.* **TESS** *looks off at where* **ELLIE** *exited.)*

PAST. Her guilt made it worse.

ELEANOR. Excuse me?

PAST. It wasn't death that frightened her. It was leaving Phillip. It filled her with terrible guilt. And the one person…the only person who could make that pain go away…

*(***PAST** *looks at* **ELEANOR**.*)*

Refused.

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *re-enters, bundled up, holding* **TESS***'s coat.)*

TESS. Did Nurse Laura see you?

*(***YOUNG PHIL** *smiles and shakes his head.* **TESS** *smiles and ruffles* **YOUNG PHIL***'s hair.)*

Come on.

*(***TESS** *takes* **YOUNG PHIL***'s hand and leads him away.)*

ELEANOR. Stop her. Stop her!

*(***ELEANOR** *looks off to the direction* **TESS** *exited.)*

PAST. Don't you want to see what happened?

ELEANOR. No. Please. I'm begging you.

PAST. Turn around, Eleanor Scrooge.

ELEANOR. I loved her. I did. I never got to tell her how much.

PAST. Turn around. I haven't finished with you yet.

ELEANOR. Please. Don't show me anymore. I'll do anything.

PAST. Turn around!

*(***ELEANOR** *turns around.* **PAST** *snaps his fingers, and the lights shift in the same area.* **ROBERT** *is pacing.* **ELLIE** *rushes in and almost passes* **ROBERT**. *She doesn't notice him.)*

ROBERT. Ellie.

*(***ELLIE** *stops.)*

ELLIE. Robert? What are you doing here?

ROBERT. Waiting. For hours.

(Gestures to where she entered from.)

Didn't your secretary tell you I was waiting outside?

ELLIE. I'm sorry. Between rushing back and forth from the office to the hospital, I've been crazy. I'm horribly behind on a contract.

ROBERT. You don't return my calls. You're never home.

ELLIE. My sister's dying, Robert.

*(***ROBERT** *crosses to* **ELLIE**.*)*

ROBERT. I want to be there for you. To help you through this.

ELLIE. I know…I…The timing is horrible. Jacob says if we get this contract through, he'll promote me. I'll be a full partner.

ROBERT. *(Flat)* That's great.

ELLIE. You're not happy for me?

ROBERT. I miss you, Ellie.

ELLIE. I know, but Oh, god, Robert. I can't do this now. I have to go.

*(***ROBERT** *takes* **ELLIE***'s arm.)*

ROBERT. Wait. I never got a chance to give you your Christmas present.

(He takes a small package out of his coat pocket.)

Open it.

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