

*Gentleman 1 & Gentleman 2*

GENTLEMAN 1. Good morning, Mr. Scrooge. Merry Christmas.  
GENTLEMAN 2. Merry Christmas to you, sir.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Bah humbug! I want to put bugs in your hair.

GENTLEMAN 1. What kind of bugs, sir?

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Oh, disgusting horrible ones who'll emit some sort of terrible liquid all over your heads. Hahahahaha. And people say I don't have a sense of humor. What is it you want today, bah-humbug. Christmas-stinks-Christmas-carols-make-me-puke.

GENTLEMAN 2. *(Aside to Gentleman 1.)* Goodness, if we lived in another century, I would say this man has Tourette's Syndrome.

GENTLEMAN 1. Mr. Scrooge, we are fellow businessmen collecting for the United Way. And every Christmas we give a little bit from our pockets to all the poor people who wander throughout London in poverty and despair. And we wondered how much we could put you down for?

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Nothing.

GENTLEMAN 1. You wish to be anonymous?

EBENEZER SCROOGE. No, no, no — I wish to give nothing. Let the poor go to workhouses, or orphanages, or die in the street. I am not my brother's keeper. I am a frugal businessman.

GENTLEMAN 1. Might you be interested in selling energy units with us?

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Energy units?

GENTLEMAN 1. Mr. Scrooge, let me introduce myself. I'm Kenneth Lay, and this is my partner Jeffrey Skilling, doesn't he have a scary face? Now let me explain energy units. *(Explains with energy and some speed.)* You see, we take the warmth given off by the candle, say, and we "package" that energy, and then we set up a tax-free corporation in the Bahamas, and then we charge poor people, and the state of California, money for the use of these energy units. And we say there's a shortage and we triple the price, and we mis-state our earnings and expenses, and our scribe Arthur Andersen shreds a lot of documents, and ultimately we make enormous profits without actually offering any services whatsoever. And then we all go bankrupt, and we retire as millionaires!

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Gentlemen, I am extremely impressed. And ~~I think I'd like to join in your business, and sell these "units~~

of energy." Oh, Bob Cratchit, come in here a minute. *(Bob Cratchit comes in.)*

BOB CRATCHIT. ~~Yes, your Grace?~~

EBENEZER SCROOGE. What is your weekly salary, Bob Cratchit?  
BOB CRATCHIT. You pay me eleven shillings, sir.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Well from now on I am paying you six shillings, Bob.

BOB CRATCHIT. Why is that, sir.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. I'm deducting five shillings from your salary, and purchasing some energy units for you and your family.

BOB CRATCHIT. Thank you, sir. And what are energy units so I may tell hard-working, exhausted Mrs. Cratchit when I see her next?  
EBENEZER SCROOGE. Energy units, Bob, are like the warmth from a candle. I know how cold you say you always are, so I'm buying you some heat. And I'm charging you five shillings for it.

BOB CRATCHIT. Energy units and more warmth. Oh I think Mrs. Cratchit will be delighted to hear this, sirs.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Merry Christmas, Bob, hahaha, humbug, kaplodey.

BOB CRATCHIT. Yes, Mr. Scrooge, thank you very much. *(Bob goes back to his desk.)*

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Our first customer.

GENTLEMAN 1. *(Offers his hand to Scrooge.)* Mr. Scrooge, I believe we've found a business partner.

EBENEZER SCROOGE. Merry Christmas! There, I can say it in celebration as long as it's a nasty thing I'm celebrating. Hooray for more money for me, and less for everybody else!

BOTH GENTLEMEN. Hear, hear, Merry Christmas! *(Lights dim on this scene. The Ghost comes downstage to speak.)*

GHOST. Wasn't that upsetting. And clearly Mr. Scrooge needs to be changed. So what shall we do next? Well I think a little visit from his ex-business partner Jacob Marley may be in order, don't you? And some scary noises and some rattling chains. Coming right up.