

AN AA CHRISTMAS CAROL September 4, 2003

Revised 10/13/2009

Characters

Ebenezer Scrooge, Winifred Nelson, Marley, Ghosts of AA Past, Present, Future

NARRATOR: Our story opens on a frosty December night. Ebenezer Scrooge and Winifred Nelson, two sober members of Alcoholics Anonymous, are at Scrooge's printing shop. Let's listen in...

(Scrooge and Nelson are sitting in chairs next to each other)

WINIFRED NELSON: Mr. Scrooge, can I ask you a question?

SCROOGE: The answer is no! You can't have a Christmas bonus, Ms. Nelson! In this economy you should be happy to have a job at all!

WINIFRED NELSON: That wasn't the question I was going to ask, Mr. Scrooge. I'm done with my work and I'm leaving for the annual Intergroup Christmas Party and wanted to know if you wanted to come. I look forward to the way we sing "The 12 Days of Christmas" every year!

SCROOGE: Do I ever go to those silly parties, Ms. Nelson?

WINIFRED NELSON: No, but that doesn't mean you can't change.

SCROOGE: That's the problem with you young kids today. Everything seems to need changing, *(in a mocking voice)* A typewriter's not good enough, I need a computer. I can't just call you on the telephone, I have to tweet you. I suppose pretty soon toilet paper will be too old-fashioned for you!

NELSON: Um, no toilet paper is still just fine, Mr. Scrooge. I was just suggesting that maybe you'd like to go and have some fun in sobriety.

SCROOGE: I didn't get sober to have fun! I got sober because I was going to die if I kept drinking! AA is serious stuff. But I don't expect a Facebook, Myspace brat like you to understand that.

NELSON: I know AA is serious, Mr. Scrooge, I'm just saying getting together with a bunch of other sober alcoholics may help lift your spirits.

SCROOGE: Who says my spirits need lifting? The arrogance of you young people! I suppose you'll "lift my spirits" by holding my hand and chanting (*mockingly*) "Keep coming back it works if you work it so work it cause you're worth it". We didn't have any of that treatment center mumbo-jumbo when I first got sober, missy!

NELSON: Really? What was it like when you first got sober, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: I'll tell you what it was like: my sponsor told me to sit down and shut up because I didn't know squat about staying sober! "Take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your big fat mouth" he told me. When I was finally able to share, the oldtimers would regularly tell me that I was full of crap and belittle and berate me! (*fondly*) Ah, yes sir, girlie, those were the good ol' days!

NELSON: That sure doesn't sound very warm and inviting.

SCROOGE: Well, we weren't having a damn tea party we were in the life-saving business!

NELSON: Look, Mr. Scrooge, I don't want to argue with you. I just thought you might want to come to the party that's all.

SCROOGE: Two words; BAH HUMBUG!

NELSON: Okay, Mr. Scrooge. I'll see you on Monday. Bye!

SCROOGE: Beat it!

(Nelson leaves. Scrooge keeps working at his desk) (wind blow and Marley moans)

(Marley appears and has chains around him)

SCROOGE: Wh-wh-who are y-y-you?

MARLEY: Don't you recognize me, Ebenezer? It's me, your old friend from your home group, Marley.

SCROOGE: There must be some mistake. Bob Marley was not in my home group. Plus I think he would probably have been in NA and not AA what with him smoking all that weed.

MARLEY: Not Bob Marley, Jacob Marley!

SCROOGE: Jacob! I'm sorry I didn't recognize you but...wow, you look terrible.

MARLEY: You should look so good after being dead seven years!

SCROOGE: Dead? That's right you're dead! Then what are you doing here?

MARLEY: I have been forced to walk the earth and visit all the wonderful fun things that AA has to offer that I never took advantage of when I was alive. I have been to roundups, parties, Unity Days, dances, assemblies, conferences, international conventions, and so much more! I've been to more potlucks than you can possibly imagine, Ebenezer. The only thing is, I can't participate in all the fun now. I can only watch.

SCROOGE: That's why you are here? To tell me that?

MARLEY: No, Ebenezer. I'm here to tell you that you are scheduled to be visited by three spirits. And I'm not talking about Ron Bacardi, Jose Quervo and Jack Daniels either.

SCROOGE: You mean...ghosts?

MARLEY: Bingo.

SCROOGE: Why am I to be haunted?

MARLEY: Number one, because you aren't on Facebook or Twitter which would have made this thing a whole lot more convenient for everyone and number two because you are a crusty old AA fart that's why! So I implore you to listen and heed what the spirits tell you, Ebenezer. Peace Out!

(wind blows, Marley exits)

SCROOGE: Three ghosts are coming to visit me? I must be dreaming. That's the only possible explanation.

(The Pina Colada Song plays as The Ghost of AA Past enters)

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Ebenezer!

SCROOGE: Who are you?

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: I am the Ghost of AA Past.

SCROOGE: Judging from your entrance music, I thought you were the Ghost of Cheesy 1970s Songs. What do you want with me?

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: I have some questions to ask you. You can even think of it as a game if you'd like. First, I want to show you something. Look over there. (*points to stage left*) What do you see?

SCROOGE: That...that's the old Triple S Club where we used to have meetings when I first got sober. But that can't be...it's not possible. The Triple S Club has been gone for years.

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Hello! That's why I'm the Ghost of AA Past! Try to keep up please! Now, describe what you see happening.

SCROOGE: They appear to be having a potluck of some sort.

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Correct! And what is that thing they are doing when they wrap their arms around each other called?

SCROOGE: Um...hugging?

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Yes! And when they make that pleasing sound with their mouths open while they smile, what's that called?

SCROOGE: Laughter?

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Laughter! If you know the answer just shout it out, Ebenezer! Who is that guy telling a funny drinking story to the small crowd of people hanging on to every word and cracking up?

SCROOGE: Why that's my first sponsor Paco Martinez! He had some hilarious stories!

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: He's not exactly like the picture you painted for Winifred of a stuffy old goat is he?

SCROOGE: Well, it had been a long time...

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Okay, I think I'm stumped when it comes to this next one: who is that guy near the coffee pot wearing the skin tight polyester pants and the silk shirt unbuttoned down to navel showing off his hairy chest and a peace sign medallion? Did one of

the Bee Gees attend the Triple S Club?

SCROOGE: No...*(sheepishly)*... that's...uh...me thirty years ago

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Are you sure that's you? Because suddenly I think I'm coming down with a case of Saturday Night Fever!

SCROOGE: Yes, I'm sure. I can't believe how young I was then. Look at me! I'm too sexy for my shirt!

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Who is that woman you're talking to with the Farrah Fawcett hairdo?

SCROOGE: *(longingly)*That's Belle Dooley.

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: It looks like you were pretty into her.

SCROOGE: Yeah, she was a rare jewel. Do you know we came into AA on the exact same day? We used to talk after meetings for hours and...*(suddenly angry)*...I don't want to be here anymore! Let's go!

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Why, Ebenezer? What's the matter?

SCROOGE: This is all in the past! It's over! Why dwell on it?

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: What happened between you and Jennifer, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE: I DON'T want to talk about it!

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Look, Ebenezer, we can't leave until you tell me what happened.

SCROOGE: Oh all right! Jennifer and I were a couple for some time until she took off with a sponsee of mine named Rufus and got married. There! Are you happy? It was like a Jerry Springer episode before there was a Jerry Springer show.

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: What night did that happen?

SCROOGE: I can't remember it was so long ago...wait a minute...I actually do remember. It was birthday night. We had a big potluck and cake and right after it in the parking lot they told me they were seeing each other. They said they realized they were "soulmates."

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: Ebenezer, have you ever thought that maybe the reason you avoid AA functions may have something to do with being dumped at one?

SCROOGE: Are you a ghost or Dr. Phil? Look, all of that's in the past! I've put it behind me and did not dwell on it. I haven't thought of Rufus and Belle for years until you threw them in my face!

THE GHOST OF AA PAST: You have some issues, Ebenezer. In fact, you don't have just issues, you have a whole subscription. There's nothing more I can do here. Farewell!

SCROOGE: See ya, wouldn't wanna be ya.

(Ghost of AA Past leaves—The 12 Days of Christmas plays as Ghost of AA Present Enters)

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: Ebenezer baby! What's hapnin'?

SCROOGE: Let me guess; you're ghost number 2, right?

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: My proper name is the Ghost of AA Present.

SCROOGE: Why are you dressed like that? Are you going to pop out of a cake or something?

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: It's a metaphor. In AA, the past is history, the future is a mystery and today is a gift that's why we call it *(waits a beat)* the present! Get it?

SCROOGE: I get that you are one of those people in AA who piss me off by making a stupid little saying out of everything. So, anyway, where are you going to take me?

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: I'm not taking you anywhere, Ebenezer because we are already there! *(points to the audience)* We are at the Intergroup Christmas party that Winifred invited you to. See all the people?

SCROOGE: Okay, I see them all here, so what?

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: No, I don't think you do. Look out at them, Ebenezer. Don't they look happy? *(to audience)* Are you guys having a good time? *(hopefully audience responds)* If you're having a good time then let me hear you! *(audience applauds)* That was lame. Let me really hear you! *(audience applauds louder)* Now isn't that fun, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE: Yes, I suppose it is. But is that why you brought me here? To watch you lead

cheers?

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: No. I brought you here to look at the people who showed up. I mean really look at them, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE: Okay, I'm looking.

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: Now, how many people can you name that you know?

SCROOGE: Well...um...uh...there's Winifred and...uh...there's a face I remember from the old days, but I can't remember his name and...um...oh, what's the point of this? That I have a bad memory?

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: The point should be obvious, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE: Look, I don't have to surround myself with a bunch of people to stay sober. I've proved that. I can do it all on my own. I haven't had a drink in decades. I know how to do AA! I don't need ghosts or a bunch of cheering morons to tell me how to stay sober!

THE GHOST OF AA PRESENT: Then my work is done. Goodbye Ebenezer. (*Ghost of AA Present leaves*)

(*"Hells Bells" plays as Ghost of AA Future enters*)

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: Ebenezer! Do you know who I am?

SCROOGE: My first guess would be that you are Obi-Wan Kenobi with that outfit, but I think you are really The Ghost of AA Future, correct?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: That is correct.

SCROOGE: So what are you going to show me?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: This. (*points to stage right*)

SCROOGE: That's uh...that's a cemetery.

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: Correct.

SCROOGE: W-why are we here?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: Read the tombstone in the front.

SCROOGE: *(kneels down)* I can't make out the name on it because of all the dirt, *(rubs it)* Wait a minute! This can't be!

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: What does it say?

SCROOGE: It's me...it has my name on it! But the date is wrong. It has to be.

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: Why do you say that?

SCROOGE: Because it says "Born January 2, 1948-- Died December 20, 2009. That can't be! That's tomorrow! There has to be some kind of mistake!

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: There is no mistake. The dates are correct.

SCROOGE: I'm gonna die tomorrow? But how? Heart attack? Stroke?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: You will die in a drunk driving accident.

SCROOGE: Why, that's horrible! A drunk driver will hit me?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: *(pause)* You will be the drunk driver Ebenezer.

SCROOGE: No! That's a lie! I haven't had a drink since 1979! Why would I start drinking again?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: You have to answer that question.

SCROOGE: I don't have an answer!

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: I will help you then. What was it that your first sponsor Paco kept having you focus on when you first got sober?

SCROOGE: That's easy. Being rigorously honest. He said that almost every time he shared at meetings too.

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: So what is the rigorously honest truth about you and your mental, emotional, and spiritual state right now, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE: I'm fine.

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: Look at the tombstone, Ebenezer. This is not a joke. Are you being rigorously honest?

SCROOGE: *(pauses)* No, no I'm not. The rigorously honest truth is that that I am a miserable, lonely old a-hole!

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: You've always been an a-hole, Ebenezer. First a drunk one, and for thirty years now a sober one. Why have you isolated yourself so much lately? Why don't you go to meetings anymore?

SCROOGE: Because they're so different than the way they used to be! My friends have all either moved away or died. There are all these young kids there now who only want to talk about drugs! I hate the Styrofoam cups! I hate giving out chips! I don't like holding hands and chanting! Why do we need to have so many pamphlets? I don't want decaf or herbal tea! I want a cup of strong, hot AA coffee! I want things to be the way they used to be!

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: Listen to yourself, Ebenezer. It sounds to me like all you need to start your own group is a coffee pot. You can call it "The Festering Resentments" group.

SCROOGE: I guess in all my anger I didn't realize how lost I really was. And now you tell me that I'm going to get drunk tomorrow and die in a car crash. Tell me one thing, do I at least get drunk on some expensive champagne or fine wine? Please tell me that if I went out after thirty years of sobriety that I went out with a little class.

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: If you consider six 40's of Olde English 800 classy then yes.

SCROOGE: Dammit! But wait a minute! You're the Ghost of AA Future! Then none of this has happened yet! I can change it, can't I?

THE GHOST OF AA FUTURE: You tell me, Ebenezer. Can you change after all this time? Can you get some emotional sobriety to go with your physical sobriety? Are you sick and tired of being sick and tired?

SCROOGE: Yes! Yes I am. I'm tired, so, so tired of being like I am. Even my dog doesn't like me. He intentionally pees in my slippers. I am tired Ghost of AA Future, I am! I'm mentally tired and actually after tonight I'm also physically tired. So, so tired...so tired...

(Scrooge goes back to his chair and sleeps, Ghost of AA Future leaves, Winifred Nelson enters)

NELSON: Mr. Scrooge! Mr. Scrooge! Wake up!

SCROOGE: Huh?...Oh.. .Winifred! What are you doing here?

NELSON: I forgot my gloves.

SCROOGE: What day is it?

WINIFRED NELSON: Um, the same day it was ten minutes ago, December 19th. Are you feeling okay? I've told you Mr. Scrooge, if you use that epoxy glue you have to open a window. The fumes can get you a little buzzy. Remember when your old helper would always want to use it and then we found out he was always listening to The Grateful Dead on his iPod at the same time?

SCROOGE: I haven't been sniffing glue or drinking 6 40 ouncers of Old English 800, Winifred. In fact, I feel great! Tell me, are you still going to the Intergroup Christmas party?

WINIFRED NELSON: Well, yes. And since when do you call me Winifred, anyway?

SCROOGE: Since now Winifred. And you know what else Winifred? I'm giving you a big fat raise! And what's more, I'm going to the party too!

NELSON: What has gotten into you, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: The AA Spirit! In fact all three of them! Listen, I have to go home and dig out my silk shirt and peace medallion and I'll meet you there okay!

NELSON: Uh...okay!

SCROOGE: *(to the audience)* Our Higher Power bless us, everyone! It's party time!

("Stayin Alive" plays as Scrooge and Winifred strut offstage—all the cast returns for a bow)

THE END