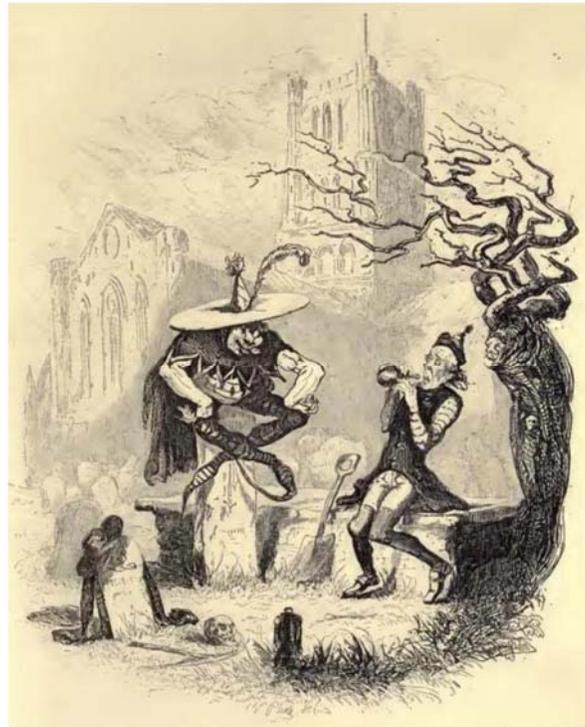


# The Goblins and a Gravedigger

BEING A RETELLING OF  
Dickens' First Christmas Tale



by

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Ah, for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be.

Tennyson

*Maud*

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- Samuel Pickwick.** 60-something founder and chairman of The Pickwick Club. A right jolly fellow.
- Mr. Wardle.** Narrator; Pickwick's friend. 40-something bachelor, devoted to his mother.
- Mrs. Wardle.** Octogenarian. Cranky. Doesn't hesitate to order around her bachelor son.
- Mrs. Britain.** Ben's mother, a widow, deathly ill.
- Doctor.** Knowledgeable, kind-hearted.
- Ben Britain.** 19. Compassionate, caring son. Smitten, initially, with Gracie.
- Deacons 1 & 2.** Church officers. Intimidated by the church sexton, Gabriel Grub.
- Gabriel Grub.** Church sexton/gravedigger. Soured on life by a traumatic childhood. A loner. Full of malice and bitterness.
- Marion.** Gracie's friend; poor village girl in love with Ben.
- Gracie.** Snobbish, haughty village girl. Using Ben until someone better comes around.
- Mr. Tugby.** The village butcher. Surrogate father to Ben.
- The Goblin.** Seems intimidating and scary but has a heart of gold. Witty, funny, kind.
- Goblins 1,2,3.** Average goblins in the crowd.
- Small goblin.** The Goblin's aide-de-camp. Officious-acting.
- Grub's father.** Stern, arrogant, hypocritical legalist, brute.
- Young Gabriel Grub.** Eight-year-old, then twelve-year-old Grub. Kind, good boy.
- Grub's mother.** Dutiful wife who is brutalized by her husband.
- Cockney 1 & 2.** Simple-minded, blue-collar workers.
- Housewife 1 & 2 and Husband 1 & 2.** Struggling poor people.
- New Sexton.** Scam artist who tries to make a buck off Grub's disappearance.
- Villager.** Skeptical customer of the new sexton.

DIRECTOR Ten seconds to air.

VARIOUS CAST MEMBERS Oh, yes. Thank you. We're ready. Thank you.

LOW NOISES OF CAST QUIETING DOWN

DIRECTOR In 5...4...3...2...1

[Note: radio directors would not say the "1," but would indicate it by holding up their index finger]

CUE: INTRODUCTION MUSIC, VOLUME DOWN FOR ANNOUNCER'S VOICE OVER

ANNOUNCER Broadcasting from the [name of radio station or venue] in [location], the [name of troupe] presents *The Goblins and the Gravedigger*, a forgotten Dickens, as told and adapted for radio by Kenny Chumbley.

And now, *The Goblins and the Gravedigger*.

RAISE VOLUME, THEN FADE OUT

PROLOGUE

THIS SCENE CAN BE INCLUDED OR OMITTED AT DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION

SOUND OF WATER DRIPPING IN A CAVE

THE GOBLIN Call everyone together; we've a visit to make.

SMALL GOBLIN Up above?

THE GOBLIN Yes...up above.

SMALL GOBLIN To whom?

THE GOBLIN A misshapen, deformed soul.

SMALL GOBLIN Can he be saved?

THE GOBLIN I don't know...it may be too late.

SMALL GOBLIN Then why bother?

THE GOBLIN Because it's Christmas, and he needs a gift.

SMALL GOBLIN A gift? What kind of gift?

THE GOBLIN A chance...a final chance.

## SCENE 1 CHRISTMAS EVE PARTY

SOUND OF BLIZZARD, WIND

DOOR OPENS.

SOUNDS OF PARTY---CLINKING GLASSES,  
LAUGHTER, CHATTER.

DOOR CLOSES, STAMPING FEET

VOICES            Ah! Pickwick's here. You're late, old chap! Welcome, Mr. Pickwick!

MR. PICKWICK     It's a frightful night to be out! And were it not for the good fellowship I expect to enjoy this evening, I'd be home.

WARDLE            Snows, does it, Mr. Pickwick?

MR. PICKWICK     I should say it does, Wardle! It's an old English blizzard we're having; a real storm.

                  It's nights like this that make the fireside warmer when you sit near it and the summer greener as you think of it.

                  BACKGROUND PARTY NOISE CONTINUES

MRS. WARDLE      What did he say? Nothing's the matter, is there?

WARDLE            No, Mother. Mr. Pickwick was just saying rough weather's afoot---heavy snow, frightful cold. I can't ever remember a Christmas Eve this wintry.

MRS. WARDLE      Well, I can! This is just like the Christmas Eve the goblins carried off Gabriel Grub.

                  PARTY NOISE STOPS---DEAD SILENCE

MR. PICKWICK     [intrigued] Who? What? Goblins?

WARDLE            [chuckling] It's nothing, Mr. Pickwick, just a silly story folks around here used to tell about a church sexton...er, gravedigger...who was snatched by goblins.

MRS. WARDLE      "Silly?!" There's no silliness to it! People here are far too sensible for silliness!

WARDLE            Now mother, don't be grouty.

MRS. WARDLE      [interrupting] Then don't say it's nonsense when it's not!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WARDLE Uh...the story about the goblins and the gravedigger is true, Mr. Pickwick, and that's the end of it.

MR. PICKWICK No, no...that's not the end, that's the start. I'd like to hear this story; I believe we'd all like to hear it!

VOICES Here, Here! Yes, tell it. Don't leave us hanging.

WARDLE [sighs] Oh, all right! Libations all around and everyone find a perch. I suppose this is as good a night as any for a fairy tale...

CHAIRS BEING PULLED UP/WOOD ON WOOD

MRS. WARDLE [loudly] CHRISTMAS TALE!

WARDLE (CONT.) Yes, Mother---as good a night as any for a *Christmas tale*.

SOUNDS OF FOLKS SETTling IN

WARDLE (CONT'D ) [clears voice] So...is everyone ready? I see you nodding yes? Good!

Well, ever so long ago, when our great-grandfathers lived and believed it...

MRS. WARDLE Which, quite frankly, means it's true.

WARDLE Yes, Mother...when our great-grandfathers lived and believed it was true, there occurred a most curious thing.

It was Christmas Eve, and at the village church, Ben--a poor boy whose only family was his widowed mother---was sweeping the sanctuary. The curate had promised him a penny if he would tidy up and ready the sanctuary for Christmas services the next morning. Two deacons---typical ecclesiastics who smelled of phylacteries---were on their way to the church for a meeting with the sexton.

SEQUE MUSIC

SCENE 2 CHURCH VESTIBULE, CHRISTMAS EVE

BEN [singing] O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant...

DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS OF TWO MEN

DEACON 1 My, word, Deacon, look who's here. Merry Christmas, Ben!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN Merry Christmas, Deacons!

DEACON 2 Aren't you in a festive mood!

BEN I'm always in a good mood at Christmas, Sir...And I try to be extra happy, fer me mother.

DEACON 2 What do you mean?

BEN Well, we lost father three Christmases ago...

DEACONS Ah, yes/I remember

BEN and Christmas ain't been the same since, 'specially, fer mother. But I've an idea that might change that. The curate's promised me a copper if I'd sweep up, and I'm going to buy some plums, hopin' that when mother see's 'em, she'll make a puddin' and forget her sadness, at least fer a while.

DEACON 1 A capital idea, Son! Good for you!

DEACON 2 Say, we're expecting the sexton any moment. When he arrives, would you tell him we're in our office?

BEN Fer sure I will. Merry Christmas to ye, and many of 'em!

"Come and behold him..."

FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS TO DEACONS' OFFICE,  
CHAIRS PULLED AROUND TABLE

DEACON 1 It's always been a mystery to me how a saint like Brother Grub could sire a ne'er-do-well son like Gabriel.

DEACON 2 Agreed! Brother Grub was such a divine: twice to church on Sunday...sometimes thrice. No one sang louder or prayed longer.

DEACON 1 Or had a son more surly or cross-grained. Gabriel Grub's look could sour milk. I'd rather be doing anything today than having him fasten his squinty eyes on me.

DEACON 2 Agreed! But there's no avoiding it.

DEACON 1 Twas a shame Brother Grub died before his three-score and ten.

DEACON 2 Do you remember the particulars?

DEACON 1 Seems it was an accident...at home...and on Christmas Eve, if memory serves.

(CONTINUED)

## BEN SINGING

BEN O come, let us adore Him...

## CHURCH DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS

GABRIEL GRUB [harshly] Stop yer caterwaulin', boy, afore I stop it fer ye.

WARDEL Gabriel Grub---a hard-featured man with a long nose, long chin, scraggly hair, and no smile---the church sexton, had arrived.

BEN But it's Christmas Eve, Sir.

GABRIEL GRUB It's gall and wormwood's what it is!

BEN Merry Christmas anyway, Mr. Grub. The deacons are waitin' in their office.

GABRIEL GRUB [muttering] The clods...waste of me time...

FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS TO DEACON'S OFFICE,  
FOOTSTEPS, CHAIR PULLED BACK, GRUB PLOPS  
DOWN

DEACON 1 Ah, Sexton! So nice of you to drop by.

GABRIEL GRUB [irritated] I didn't "drop by"; I were told to be here.

DEACON 2 Yes, well...

GABRIEL GRUB What's this abou'? Say yer say!

DEACON 1 [clears throat, nervous] Well, our say is this: as you know, this time each year it's customary for the deacons to distribute gifts of appreciation to the church help.

GABRIEL GRUB [surly] So?

DEACON 2 (nervously) So...it's with regret that we must inform you...there will be no gift for you this year.

GABRIEL GRUB [angrily] Wha'd I just 'ear? I's gettin' no money? An' why's that? I know fer a fact the church baskets 'ave been brimmin' o'er of late!

DEACON 1 Money's not the problem.

GABRIEL GRUB [threateningly] Then wha' is?

DEACON 2 The problem...Sexton...

DEACON 1 Is you!

(CONTINUED)

GRUB BANGS HIS FIST ON TABLE

GABRIEL GRUB I? Yer sayin' I's the problem?!

DEACON 2 There've been complaints.

DEACON 1 Parishioners are upset; they claim it's always a jolt and a jar when they must deal with you to arrange a funeral. It almost seems you take pleasure in giving everyone as much trouble as possible.

GABRIEL GRUB So?

DEACON 1 The complaints merit action, but out of respect to your sainted father, we're allowing you to retain your position.

GABRIEL GRUB Me father...a saint?

CYNICAL LAUGH

CHAIR PUSHED BACK FROM TABLE AS GRUB STANDS UP

DEACON 2 Do remember there's a grave that needs to be dug.

GABRIEL GRUB I don't need yer remindin'!

DEACON 1 I think we're finished here. Have you anything to add?

GABRIEL GRUB I does: yer asses...both of ye!

DEACON 2 [shocked] MR. GRUB!

DOOR SLAMS

DEACON 1 On my word! Such impudence!

DEACON 2 Yes, Deacon, but we must tread lightly here---good gravediggers are hard to find.

SEQUE MUSIC

SCENE 3 GRUB'S HOUSE

WARDLE Grub, as you can imagine, left in an ugly mood. When he reached his home---a fusty old shanty---he found his flask and was soon imbibing. By late afternoon, his disposition, fanned by drink, was as dark as the gathering gloam.

SOUNDS OF GRUB KNOCKING ABOUT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABRIEL GRUB [grumbling] I might as well dig that blasted grave. Where's me flask?

WARDLE Collecting his spade, lantern, and liquor, Gabriel Grub headed for the road to the graveyard known as "Coffin Lane."

LAUGHTER, SHOUTS OF "MERRY CHRISTMAS,"  
CAROLERS CAROLING

WARDLE (CONT'D ) Night was heavy and snow had started to fall as Grub stumbled out. His trek to the cemetery sorely tempted his shriveled soul, for he was surrounded by Christmas life---the sound of sleigh bells, the glad light of fireplaces reflected through frosted windows, the shouts of neighbors wishing each other "Merry Christmas," the aromas of geese being stuffed and pudding being boiled---all of which made him hiss like a green log thrown on the fire. He would have been happier to have seen children sick with fever, or measles, or croup, or whooping cough, for in those cases, there was always the chance his professional services might be needed.

Despite the numerous irritations, he scuttled on, heading for Coffin Lane.

BEN COMES INTO RANGE AND IS HEARD SINGING

BEN [singing] Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plain...

WARDLE At the very time Grub was heading out, young Ben was heading home with the plums he'd bought.

GABRIEL GRUB Who's makin' that infernal noise?...Ah, I might have guessed...it's the rook that were a torment to me earlier!

You! Boy! Come here!

BEN Yes? Oh, hallo, Mr. Grub. Merry Christmas again! I'm on my way home with some plums, hopin' me mother'll make a pudding.

GABRIEL GRUB Plum puddin', ye say.

BEN [happily] Yes, Sir!

WARDLE Ben's joy was more than Grub could bear. In an instant, the bitterness within him rose like a mist of malignity that bordered on madness. Rage, like love and fortune, blinds, and Grub could no more see the depravity in what he did next than he could see the back side of the north wind.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Swiftly---unconsciously---his fury welled into a vicious blow delivered to the side of Ben's head.

FIST HITTING FLESH

BEN SHRIEKS

WARDLE (CONT'D ) A second battery followed the first, dropping Ben to the ground.

FIST HITTING FLESH, AGAIN

BEN SHRIEKS AGAIN; BEN SOBBING

BEN Please, Sir, whatever I did, I'm sorry.

GABRIEL GRUB [yelling] Don't e'er git Christmasy 'round me again, ye 'ear?!

BEN [sobbing] I won't, Sir.

WARDLE With his senseless rage momentarily sated, Grub continued happily on his way, leaving Ben beaten and sobbing in the snow.

SEQUE MUSIC

SCENE 4 CHURCH GRAVEYARD, NIGHT

SOUNDS OF WARDLE'S PARTY

WARDLE (CONT'D ) By the time he reached the graveyard, the night was dark, the wind was stirring, and snow was falling.

But---before continuing---might anyone need a spot of tea or some bread pudding?

MR. PICKWICK Not now, Man, your story enchants us; onward!

VOICES "Aye," "Tally ho!" "We'll eat later"

WARDLE As it seems no pause is needed, I shall do as you direct and continue.

SHOVEL DIGGING IN DIRT, DIRT BEING DUMPED ON GROUND/PANTING

GABRIEL GRUB [mumbling] It's gittin' colder? Blast it!...where'd I put me flask? Ah, here it is.

SOUND OF GULPING, FOLLOWED BY BELCH

GABRIEL GRUB (CONT'D) Jus' what the doctor ordered.

[MELODY FOR DIRGE FOUND AT END OF SCRIPT] (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GABRIEL  
GRUB (CONT'D)

Brave lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one /  
 A hole of cold earth, when life is done /  
 A stone at the 'ead, a stone at the feet /  
 A right juicy meal for the worms to eat

Ha!---there's a thought...a Christmas fun'ral! They  
 should tie a red bow around the coffin! Ho, Ho, Ho.

THE GOBLIN

[loud reverb] HO, HO, HO.

GABRIEL GRUB

Wha'?...Who's tha'?...IS SOMEONE THERE? [slight  
 pause] No? Mus' 'ave been an echo.

THE GOBLIN

IT WAS NOT!

SIBILANT WHISPERING

GOBLINS

There he is!

Hunt him! Haunt him! Hunt him! Haunt him! Hunt him!  
 Haunt him!

WARDLE

Suddenly, Grub saw---maybe just felt---a shadow (or  
 was it the shadow of a shadow) flit by, and the  
 starch began ebbing from his spine.

GABRIEL GRUB

[alarmed] Who...who's there?

THE GOBLIN

TURN AROUND AND YOU'LL SEE.

WARDLE

When Grub turned, what he saw made his blood run  
 cold, for seated upon a tombstone was a strange  
 phantom. His long legs were crossed in a quaint  
 fashion, and his hands rested upon his knees. He wore  
 a bright green, close-fitting garment trimmed in gold  
 brocade. A short cloak dangled from his back. On his  
 head was a pointed hat---the kind known as a sugar-  
 loaf---garnished with a long feather. His shoes  
 curled at the toes, and he looked as if he'd been  
 sitting there comfortably for two or three hundred  
 years.

It was a goblin! grinning as only a goblin can grin.

The shock to Grub's nerves was so sharp it gave him a  
 jerk that nearly threw him to the ground. It was all  
 he could do to regather his courage enough to speak.

GABRIEL GRUB

[gasp] Who...who...are you?

THE GOBLIN

A neighbor...a good neighbor.

GABRIEL GRUB

Neigh...neigh...neigh...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE GOBLIN           Spit it out, man; you sound like a horse! Yes, neighbor! *Friend and neighbor!*

                          What brings you here this night?

GABRIEL GRUB        A g-grave, Sir. I's here to dig a grave.

THE GOBLIN         [loudly] Who makes graves when others make merry?

GOBLINS             [whispers] gabriel grub! gabriel grub! gabriel grub!

THE GOBLIN         What's in the flask, gravedigger?

GABRIEL GRUB        B-b-brandly.

THE GOBLIN         Are you drunk?

GABRIEL GRUB        To me knees, maybe, but no higher.

THE GOBLIN         [laughs] Who drinks on a night like this?

GOBLINS             [louder] Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!

THE GOBLIN         [loudest] WHOM DO WE CLAIM AS OUR FAIR AND LAWFUL PRIZE?

GOBLINS             [shouting] GABRIEL GRUB! GABRIEL GRUB! GABRIEL GRUB!

                          THE GOBLIN SCREAMS AN UNEARTHLY SHRIEK

GABRIEL GRUB        [terrified] Arrrgggghh.

THE GOBLIN         Have you anything to say, gravedigger?

GABRIEL GRUB        [trembling voice] It's...it's...very curious, Sir.

                          But it could be the spirits I's seein' are from the spirits I's drinkin.

WARDLE             At this, the goblin gave Grub a kick that bowled him over.

GABRIEL GRUB        OOOhhh!

THE GOBLIN         Has anything from a bottle ever given you a kick like that, gravedigger?

                          GRUB GROANS

THE GOBLIN (CONT'D) [loudly] Who thinks what he's seeing comes from a bottle?  
)

GOBLINS             GABRIEL GRUB! GABRIEL GRUB! GABRIEL GRUB!

THE GOBLIN         My friends seem to know you, gravedigger; they seem to know you well. (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GABRIEL GRUB Beggin' pardon, Sir, but I don't know 'ow they'd know me; we've not been introduced.

[insolently] An' e'en if we 'ad, what gives ye the right to question me bizness?

THE GOBLIN [angrily] Right? You ask me about *rights*? What gave you the right to beat a poor boy on Christmas Eve?! HOW DARE YOU CHALLENGE MY RIGHT TO QUESTION YOUR WRONG!

THE GOBLIN SHRIEKS AGAIN

GABRIEL GRUB [terrified] I...I's afraid I must be goin'.

THE GOBLIN [laughs] Going? The gravedigger says he must be going! HO! HO! HO

HOWLING WIND, RINGING BELL, ORGAN,  
GOBLINS' LAUGHTER

WARDLE Suddenly, the night seemed to go wild! The wind tore about as if it was crazed. The lights in the church flashed a pale yellow, and the organ whorled out unearthly music.

Around Grub suddenly appeared a gob of goblins---they capered, they reeled, they skirled, leapfrogging over tombs and one another.

THE GOBLIN [above the din] The only place you're going, gravedigger, is with us.

SOUNDS FADE

WARDLE Before Grub could escape, the goblin grabbed his collar, and the two of them sank into the earth.

SINKING SOUND

GABRIEL GRUB [screams] ARGGGGHHHHH!

WARDLE And with that, the goblins were gone as quickly as elves flee at the crack of dawn.

SEQUE MUSIC

SCENE 5 GOBLINS' CAVERN

WATER DRIPPING

WARDLE (CONT'D ) In the rapidity of the descent, Grub lost his breath. When he caught it, he found himself in a large, subterranean hall, such as the old legends associated with dwarves.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

The lighting was neither black night nor bright day, but more like twilight, when shadows that have been prisoned up all day are released.

Around him were goblins. Before him, sitting on a throne carved from a large rock, was the goblin, with whom he'd been speaking.

Grub's fear had now multiplied six times larger than it was on the surface.

THE GOBLIN Welcome to our humble home, gravedigger!

My, but it's cold enough to take the skin off your face. Bring me something...sizzling!

FEET SCURRY, LIQUID POURING, GLASS  
CLINKING, SOUND OF FIRE CRACKLING

SMALL GOBLIN Here you are, Sire. **[Note: if a celebrity cameo would like to be included, this is the perfect line for the guest to appear and read.]**

WARDLE What was handed the goblin was a clear goblet filled with what looked like liquid fire. As the goblin drained the cup, a red-hot glow could be seen descending his throat.

LOUD GULP, BELCH

THE GOBLIN Ahhhh! That makes me feel balmy! A bumper for our guest!

GABRIEL GRUB Thank ye, but I's not in the 'abit of taking anything warm at night.

THE GOBLIN Then you need a new habit.

If he won't drink it, pin him on the ground and pour it down his throat.

SCUFFLING

GABRIEL GRUB No, I don't want...

CHOKING, COUGHING, SPUTTERING

WARDLE Seeing Grub's reaction to the fiery froth caused the entire assemblage to break out in laughter.

SCREECHING, LAUGHING

THE GOBLIN [trying to stop laughing, catching his breath] Do you know why we brought you here, gravedigger?

GABRIEL GRUB [insolently] Because yer trolls, the lot of 'em. (CONTINUED)

## LOUD GASP FROM GOBLINS

THE GOBLIN           Trolls? I assure you we're not trolls.  
  
I'll admit we're romps; I'll even admit we can be naughty.

## RAPID-FIRE INTERJECTIONS

GOBLIN 1            We might spill your milk or tap on your windows.

GOBLIN 2            Or hide your sheep.

GOBLIN 3            Or untie your water bucket and let it fall down the well.

THE GOBLIN           But we're not even our stepmother's half-brother's third cousin's nephew to trolls. We dread those misfits as much as you do.  
  
So guess again; why do you think we brought you here.

GABRIEL GRUB        To rob me of me life, I wager.

THE GOBLIN           No, no, I told you, we're not trolls. You're an abysmal guesser, gravedigger, so I'll answer the question myself.  
  
You're here, because it's Christmas, and we've a gift for you.

GABRIEL GRUB        I don't know what yer talkin' 'bout.

THE GOBLIN           Unhappily, Christmas comes but once a year (if it would stay the year round, this old world might be a very different place), but whenever it comes, the boys and I put on our bettermost and give a gift to someone in trouble.

GABRIEL GRUB        I ain't in trouble!

THE GOBLIN           Oh, but you are...you're in more trouble than you know.  
  
The bad usually aren't all bad, but in your case, I'm not so sure.

GABRIEL GRUB        Yer daft!

THE GOBLIN           [laughs] I doubt you've thought much about how despicable you are; but you will this night. The boys and I will see to that!

GABRIEL GRUB        Yer beyond daft!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE GOBLIN Gravedigger, you're mightily tempting me to leave you to your fate, but I shall resist temptation.

So what gift have we for this pathetic excuse of a man, boys?

GOBLINS *The Book! The Book! The Book!*

THE GOBLIN Ah yes...*THE BOOK! BRING IT!*

WARDLE Gabriel Grub, who had never sought compassion or comfort from any living creature, had no interest in gifts. But the goblins were not about to let him ignore the gift they had for him.

At the goblin's command, the assembly parted and a small, officious-acting goblin walked in carrying an over-sized book. Grub could only look on, utterly bewildered.

SMALL GOBLIN Here you go, Sire.

THE GOBLIN Ah, yes! Look at this, gravedigger...a one-of-a-kind, hot-off-the-press, first-edition, copyright-pending book...that is yours to keep!

GABRIEL GRUB [surly] I don't want it!

THE GOBLIN (laughs) But it's your book, gravedigger. See, it has your name on it right here on the cover, "Gabriel Grub."

But don't judge this book by its cover...this book must be judged by its soul. For the soul of this book, gravedigger, is your very own.

GABRIEL GRUB I ain't a reader.

THE GOBLIN Not a problem, because you don't read this book. It's an enchanted book that serves as a mirror. You don't look at a mirror to look at the mirror; you look at a mirror to look at yourself. And this book, just like a mirror, will reveal yourself to yourself in only three pages!

GABRIEL GRUB Bah!

THE GOBLIN "Why only three pages?" I'm glad you asked.

Every book, gravedigger, has only three parts: a beginning, an ending, and an in-between. And every life, like every book, has three parts. Thus, your book has a page for your *past*, your *present*, and your *passing*.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

I'll venture you weren't expecting such a valuable gift like this for Christmas!

GABRIEL GRUB I'll venture I's reportin' ye to the sheriff for kidnapping!

THE GOBLIN [laughs] Go ahead, gravedigger, report us. But if your sheriff is like most sheriffs, he's a narrowly focused, fact-obsessed dullard who is far too intelligent to believe in goblins.

So do your worst! But in the meanwhile, let's get to your story, beginning with your past, not because it can be bent out of its eternal shape, but because what you are now is tied to what happened to you then.

SHOW HIM THE PAGE FROM HIS PAST. And if he won't look, squeeze his head till his eyes pop out!

GOBLINS Hang him! Make him look! Off with his head!

WARDLE As anticipated, Grub refused to look. The goblin nodded and a large goblin stepped forward, grabbed the back of Grub's head, and shoved it down until his eyes were on the page.

THE GOBLIN What do you see, gravedigger?

GABRIEL GRUB [gasps] A drawin'...o' me!...as a boy...and me father.

THE GOBLIN My goodness but what's the matter? You seem troubled and your tongue seems tied. Why would the sight of you with your father distress you?

WARDLE What Grub saw was a drawing of a man---angular, long-faced, stern-looking---sitting in a Queen Anne chair and reading from a large Bible he held on his lap. A boy of about eight was in front of the fireplace playing with his wooden soldiers. As Grub looked on, the picture suddenly came to life.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

GABRIEL'S FATHER "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all...

GABRIEL SNEEZES

GABRIEL'S FATHER (CONT'D)  
)

Hallo? What was that?

YOUNG GABRIEL Nothing, Father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GABRIEL'S FATHER Nothing?

YOUNG GABRIEL I only sneezed, Father.

GABRIEL'S FATHER Sneezed, you say? But a sneeze is *something*, is it not?

YOUNG GABRIEL Please, Father...

SOUND OF BOOK BEING LAID ON TABLE,  
FOOTSTEPS OVER TO GABRIEL

GABRIEL'S FATHER (CONT.) So why did you say *nothing* happened when something, in fact, happened?

YOUNG GABRIEL [whimpering; knows what's coming] Please, Father.

HARD SLAP TO FACE

YOUNG GABRIEL (CONT'D) Owww! Please, Father; I'm sorry...

SECOND HARD SLAP TO FACE

GABRIEL SCREAMS, CRIES, WHIMPERS

GABRIEL'S FATHER Stop your sniveling, you worthless cob.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GABRIEL GRUB [shaky voice] In public, me old man were the picture of piety---spoke of God, read 'is Bible, church-goin'---things that 'ave the ring of the devout about 'em. But fer all 'is religion, 'e weren't the better fer it. Ye never knew when 'e'd rage. Anythin' could set 'im off; nothin' could set 'im off. 'E never needed cause to beat me.

[angrily] Why are ye showin' me these things, forcin' me down paths where I don't wan' to go?

THE GOBLIN Why? Because you're walking the same path as your father.

GABRIEL GRUB I ain't!

THE GOBLIN YOU ARE!

There's more on the page; look again.

WARDLE When Grub did, he saw another drawing on the page. It was the same room as before, but now, a sparsely adorned Christmas tree stood in the corner, and some cheap holiday decorations sat on the mantle.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

But he saw something else...his mother and father...arguing. Once again, the drawing came to life.

## BEGIN FLASHBACK

GABRIEL'S MOTHER [sobbing] Please, Dear; let go of my arm, you're hurting me. I won't bring it up again. I was just saying it would help if you..."

GABRIEL'S FATHER You're right, woman; you'll not bring it up again.

HARD SLAP ACROSS FACE. MRS. GRUB CRIES OUT, FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

DOOR OPENS

YOUNG GABRIEL [screams] MOTHER!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?

GABRIEL'S FATHER Get out, boy, this doesn't concern you.

YOUNG GABRIEL (shouting) You're wrong! It does concern me!

FOOTSTEPS, CLANGING IRON

GABRIEL'S FATHER Put the poker down, and get out.

YOUNG GABRIEL No!

GABRIEL'S FATHER I told you to leave!

YOUNG GABRIEL I won't.

GABRIEL'S FATHER [yelling] I SAID, PUT IT DOWN!

WARDLE When Gabriel's father stepped back to put distance between himself and his son, he tripped over the fallen body of his wife.

WARDLE (CONT'D ) In falling, the man's head struck the edge of the table. As he lay on the floor...there was a dull, hollow moan...then nothing.

DULL THUD OF HEAD STRIKING WOOD, BODY FALLING ON FLOOR

GABRIEL'S FATHER [dull, hollow moan] Uh...

POKER DROPS ON FLOOR

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

YOUNG GABRIEL     Mother, are you alright? He won't hurt us again.

FLASHBACK ENDS

GABRIEL GRUB     Why must I see this?! Why are ye conjurin' up these ghosts?

THE GOBLIN       [tenderly] You've seen your share of the worst, gravedigger; you've every right to be angry.

But anger is a ticklish thing. It releases into the soul tremendous...ssssteam...that can be used to drive a hammer or tap an egg. Some use anger's energy to rise above their wounds, if only to let their scourge know they're unbroken. But others are destroyed by it. When we are unwilling to let wrongs done against us die, anger can drive us to madness...and worse.

GABRIEL GRUB     [panicky] I's 'eard enough of yer mush.

THE GOBLIN       You have, have you? In that case, you must see the page of what is. SHOW HIM HIS PRESENT!

GABRIEL GRUB     No, please...

PRESENT SCENE BEGINS

FUMBLING AT DOOR LATCH, DOOR SQUEAKS OPEN

BEN'S MOTHER     Ben, is that you?

BEN               [weakly] Yes, Mother.

BEN'S MOTHER     Is something wrong?

GASP OF ALARM

Ben! You've been crying...

BEN               I was in a scrape, Mother.

BEN'S MOTHER     With whom?

BEN               The sexton.

BEN'S MOTHER     The sexton? You mean, Gabriel Grub? What happened?

BEN               He hit me.

BEN'S MOTHER     He hit you? But why?

BEN               I don't know. I'd seen him at the church earlier, and he were in a foul mood...but he's always in a foul mood.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

I was on my way home, singing, when I saw him coming towards me. Next thing I knows, he's beating me. But Mother...

## BEN STARTS CRYING

BEN (CONT'D) I didn't do anything wrong; believe me, I didn't.

BEN'S MOTHER Oh, Ben; my poor boy. Does it still hurt?

BEN Yes...but not as much on my head as in my heart.

BEN'S MOTHER I don't understand.

BEN The curate gave me a penny fer sweeping out the church, and I used it to buy some plums. Ever since we lost Father, Christmas has been a bad time fer you...I was hopin' you'd see the plums and think to make some puddin'...like ye used to...and ye'd be happy again.

But when Mr. Grub hit me, I dropped the plums, and afore he finished, he'd knocked me on top of 'em. They're smashed. I'm so sorry, Mother, I was wantin' to surprise you.

## SLIGHT PAUSE

BEN'S MOTHER My sweet boy...you've wonderfully surprised me! Don't worry about the plums. But if that villain Gabriel Grub ever touches you again...*God help him!*

## PRESENT SCENE ENDS

GABRIEL GRUB [embarrassed, defensive] The boy were bein' impert'nent.

THE GOBLIN [voice rises, indignant] NO HE WASN'T! When one like you is driven by hate, the smallest things assume major significance! Ben Britain's hair may need brushing, and his hands cleaning, and his clothes mending, but he's a harmless, warmhearted, affectionate child who never did you wrong.

Yet you took something as innocent as a child sneezing---in this case, a child singing---and did to a poor boy worse than your father did to you!

WHAT YOU DID CRIES TO HEAVEN!

GABRIEL GRUB [defiantly] Cries to 'eaven? Jus' what do ye know about "cries to 'eaven," goblin?! What do ye know about 'avin' a father who'd as soon beat ye as look at ye? What do you know about 'avin' no one to rest your your heart on?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

What do ye know abou' the nightmare of seein' yer father beat yer mother's face to pulp? What do ye know abou' the 'ell I's carried inside me because of wha' I's been through?

TELL ME, GOBLIN, WHAT DO YE KNOW ABOU' ANY OF THIS?!

PAUSE

WARDLE For the longest time, the goblin didn't speak--- sometimes, wisdom manifests itself in silence.

THE GOBLIN What do I know? I know that given what you endured, it's no surprise you've become what you are.

It was a blessing your father died, but he left you a terrible legacy, a tendency to evil, that you have taken and developed.

GABRIEL GRUB I don't want to hear it!

THE GOBLIN But hear it you shall! The facts are undeniable, gravedigger; but you still resist them. Which means, you must see the last page...the page of your passing.

GABRIEL GRUB (suddenly desperate, sobbing) No, NOOOOOO...

THE GOBLIN [with reverb] SHOW HIM!

SOUND OF PAGE TURNING

WARDLE The drawing on the last page was of black night and a black hole that was an old, abandoned house that reeked of damp, and mold, and filth. In front of the door stood two men bearing on their shoulders what looked like a body wrapped in burlap. As Grub looked on, what happened before happened again: the picture became animated. The man in front carried a lantern and was talking.

BEGIN PASSING SCENE

COCKNEY 1 [Cockney accent] Tis a cold Christma' Eve, eh, Mate?

COCKNEY 2 [Cockney accent] Aye. And I twern't be out, 'cept fer me wife screechin' about' 'avin' nothin' decent fer Christma' meal. "What abou' the odds and ends I put in the cupboard," I asked, "the muffins and crumpets I found behin' the baker's? Scrape off the mold, and they's as good as new."

COCKNEY 1 Wha'd she say?

COCKNEY 2 Nothin'.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Jus' started flailin' away wif 'er skillet and said if'n I didn't come up wif somethin' proper fer Christma' meal, she'd knock me into next year. I's only 'ere cause I's in no 'urry to git to next year.

COCKNEY 1           Ye let yer woman squawk at ye like that? Yer an embarrassment to 'usbandry!

COCKNEY 2           Maybe so, but it's too late to undo it now.

DOOR CREAKS OPEN, STEPS ON CREAKY FLOOR

COCKNEY 2           What the deuce! This place smells worse than stinkin' meat. An' say, why's we bringin' the body 'ere? Why ain't we takin' it to the cem'tery?

COCKNEY 1           The deacons said they wouldn't allow the scoundrel to be buried in 'oly ground. They's payin' us to dispose of 'im on the cheap, an' there's nothin' cheaper I know o' than this.

COCKNEY 2           Wha' do ye mean?

COCKNEY 1           I mean we's leavin' 'im fer the rats---this place is crawlin' with 'em.

COCKNEY 2           [shocked] Rats?!

COCKNEY 1           They'll 'ave 'is bones picked clean afore we git 'ome. An' I've a bag of cheese curds to sprinkle on the remains...priming the pump, ye might say.

COCKNEY 2           This is givin' me the creeps. If ye 'adn't been so late meetin' up, we'd already be done an' back 'ome.

COCKNEY 1           I aimed to be earlier, but just as I's leavin', me woman tells me I ain't goin' nowheres till I'd plucked the squab fer the pigeon-pie we's havin' fer Christmas dinner and pitted the cherries meant fer the puddin'.

LONG PAUSE

COCKNEY 2           [incredulous] Ye were late...cause yer woman made ye stay 'ome to pluck and pit?

COCKNEY 1           I twas. I weren't about to light her fuse the night afore Christma'; what kind of idiot do ye take me fer?

Let's dump Grub and clear out o' 'ere afore the rats mistake us fer dinner.

END PASSING SCENE

GABRIEL GRUB       [gasps] Grub? Did he say "Grub"?                   (CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

THE GOBLIN I believe he did, but let me check with the boys.  
What'd he say, boys?

GOBLINS Grub! Grub! Grub!

THE GOBLIN That's what I heard, gravedigger.

WARDLE Hearing this, a sense of cold terror seized Gabriel Grub as the ugliness in his soul worked its way into his consciousness.

GABRIEL GRUB [stunned] So tha's 'ow I end? No mourners, no coffin, no preacher sayin' a good word o'er me...jus' rats?

THE GOBLIN A good word? What good word would that be, gravedigger?

LONG PAUSE

GABRIEL GRUB There ain't one.

BARELY AUDIBLE

GABRIEL GRUB (CONT'D) I understand...there's nothin' that can be done fer me.

THE GOBLIN Nothing be done? Who told you that?

GABRIEL GRUB Ye jus' showed me...

THE GOBLIN I showed you what shall be if you continue to anger your life away.  
  
But remember this and remember it to the last---so long as there's life, there's hope.

GABRIEL GRUB 'Ope?

THE GOBLIN There's more mercy in heaven and on earth than you've dreamed of, gravedigger.  
  
You're awfully unlovable, and many will think it a good day when the world's rid of you.  
  
But if the sand caked to the bottom of your boots can be thrown into the fire to make a crystal through which the stars can be seen...there's hope, gravedigger...even for you.

WARDLE It was as if a thousand thunders went off inside Grub, for there is nothing in this world brighter than the brightness of hope. And against all hope there it was, suddenly, unexpectedly within his reach!  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

In what had seemed the darkest night, a faint ember now shone like the sun, and it dropped Grub to his knees. Raising his clasped hands to the goblin he said...

GABRIEL GRUB [pleading] Please, goblin, I beg you...tell me about 'ope; tell me 'ow I can escape the rats and the ending I deserve?

THE GOBLIN What you're asking for is the hardest thing you'll ever hear, gravedigger, but here it is: you must love.

GABRIEL GRUB [surprised] Love? What do ye mean?

THE GOBLIN I mean you must begin to live as if another's life is greater than your own. I mean you must show devotion and humiliation...submission to someone you think is beneath you...service to others...trust and belief, and sacrifice to those who favor you, wound you, or tear your heart to pieces.

To love is a long, long road, but walking it is the only way to conquer the ghosts that haunt you and free you from a past that holds you. Love is a task and a trudge...but the greatest thing this world knows is love. You can love, gravedigger...I know you can...I know you can.

LONG PAUSE

WARDLE For what seemed forever, Grub stood silent, with his head bowed.

GABRIEL GRUB I's been ripped up this night.

THE GOBLIN What's that?

GABRIEL GRUB I's never felt more shame than I has this night by thinking of what I am.

THE GOBLIN Splendid!

GABRIEL GRUB Ye've taught me, Sir.

THE GOBLIN The dickens you say! And just what is it I've taught you?

GABRIEL GRUB That I's been a bloody fool.

Fer 'owever many days are left me, I means to spend 'em unselfing meself.

WARDLE Springing from his throne, the goblin removed his hat and with a flourish bowed to the sexton and said,  
(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

THE GOBLIN [with sincere respect] Your servant, Sir.

WARDLE The cavern darkened. First, the goblin, then the rest, stepped back into the shadows...and were gone.

Gabriel Grub, utterly spent, lay down on the ground and fell asleep.

SEQUE MUSIC

SCENE 6 CHURCH GRAVEYARD, CHRISTMAS MORNING

GRUB AWAKENS, YAWNS, STRETCHES

GABRIEL GRUB [groggy] Wha'? I mus' 'ave gotten too deep into the spirits las' night.

[less groggy] No, wait...*spirits...the book...me father...the boy...the rats...the goblins!*

I's been with the goblins!

PROGRESSION OF JOY FROM SNICKER TO GIGGLE  
TO LAUGHTER TO GUFFAW

WARDLE After night comes morning, and with morning comes hope. Gabriel Grub had never known a night so long, so short, or so significant, and he awoke an altered man.

He was covered with frost, his flask still lay on the ground with his spade and lantern, and the grave was still half dug. Everything was as it had been, except there were no goblins to be seen.

CHURCH BELL PEALS

GABRIEL GRUB The bell...yes, the bell,..it's Christmas!

[giddy] It's Christmas! And there's 'ope, there's 'ope, there's 'ope! So long as I's alive the goblin said---and I's alive, I am!---there's 'ope.

GABRIEL GRUB WHOOPING IT UP IN  
BACKGROUND/THERE'S HOPE! THERE'S HOPE!

WARDLE [chuckling] Had you seen him, you would have thought Grub was seized by hysterics. He took no heed of anybody or anything. He ran about like a child. He scooped up handfuls of snow and threw it in the air, leaving him so covered with the frozen fluff that he began to resemble a snowman. He laughed and cried in the same breath. Joy had returned to Gabriel Grub's heart, and, like a flood, swept everything before it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

## GRUB LAUGHING, CHURCH BELL PEALING

GABRIEL GRUB Wait...love...the goblin said only love can change my fate!

WARDLE Love is its own taskmaster, and Gabriel Grub, now swept away by love, would brook no delay in acting lovingly, and down the road to the village he ran.

Malicious people are often miserly, and Gabriel Grub was like most. Through the years he hoarded his earnings without a thought to anyone else. But after being schooled on love in the goblin's cavern, he determined to become an *angel*---a benefactor--- sharing what he had with the poor, the hurting, the despairing.

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH SUNG BY BEN  
AND HIS MOTHER

WARDLE (CONT'D ) Excessive sorrow is proverbially selfish, and for all her goodness, Mrs. Britain's grief had narrowed her world to where she barely saw beyond herself. But Ben's unshakeable joy had now opened her eyes to where she could now see how wrong she'd been in allowing sorrow for the husband she'd lost to cause her to overlook the son she had.

Though she and Ben had little more than Christmas morning than each other, they had their voices, and they used them to sing out their joy.

"ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH" SUNG BY  
BEN AND HIS MOTHER

## KNOCKING AT DOOR

BEN'S MOTHER Who could that be?

BEN I don't know; I'll check.

## FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS

BEN (CONT'D) There's no one here, Mother.

BEN'S MOTHER But someone jus' knocked...

BEN I know...wait, there's something on the ground...a bag.

## DOOR CLOSES, FOOTSTEPS

BEN'S MOTHER What's in it?

BEN I don't know; let me open...

(CONTINUED)

## HEAVY COINS SPILLING ONTO TABLE; GASPS

BEN'S MOTHER Gold sovereigns...silver crowns! Ben, someone's left a present at the wrong house.

BEN There's a note. "To Ben, compliments of the goblins"?

WARDLE It wasn't a mistake...it was love.

No one ever suspected the godsend came from Gabriel Grub, for he was nowhere to be found. Grub was wise enough to know that sympathy for a hard-featured, hard-hearted sinner doesn't come easily; he knew he had stirred the enmity of nearly everyone in town, and the thought of remaining where his repentance would be doubted and his reformation disbelieved was more than he could face. He understood life well enough to know that when a fire rages, the wise thing is to back away until it has burnt itself out.

This he did, and eventually, the enmity the town had for him died out, starved to death by his absence and the passing of time.

With his knapsack stuffed with coins, he journeyed to where he was unknown and there did all the good he could with as little fuss as possible.

In time, by constant, loving acts, Gabriel Grub rose to a height beyond himself.

And wonderful things began to happen.

## KNOCKING AT DOOR

WARDLE (CONT'D ) Late at night, poor people, struggling to pay their rent, and facing eviction, would hear a knock at the door. Upon answering, all they'd ever find was a small bag containing gold and silver coins, and a note...

HUSBAND 1 "Compliments of the goblins..."

WIFE 1 Goblins? What does that mean, Dear?

WARDLE Parents with a sick child, but without money for a doctor, had similar experiences.

## KNOCKING, DOOR OPENS

WIFE 2 Yes?...no one's here...just...wait a bag...with a note.

## PAPER UNFOLDING

HUSBAND 2 What does it say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WIFE 2                   It says, "Compliments of the goblins."

WARDLE                   Just as he promised in the goblins' cavern, Gabriel Grub unselfed himself. Breathing the kind air of love, he grew younger and happier even as his body grew older and weaker. He laughed much, was merry often, and won affection by his affection. In time, the loveliest thing about Gabriel Grub...was Gabriel Grub.

## SEGUE MUSIC

## SCENE 7 CHRISTMAS EVE PARTY

WARDLE (CONT'D )       AND THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS THE STORY OF THE GOBLINS WHO STOLE A GRAVEDIGGER.

MR. PICKWICK           Superb story, Wardle! Captivating! One worthy of this blessed night!

MRS. WARDLE           (irritated) 'Cept 'e didn't finish it!

MR. PICKWICK           What? There's more?

WARDLE                 A bit, but I fear everyone has had enough of Grub and the goblins for one night.

MR. PICKWICK           Rubbish! Whatever is left, tell it!

VOICES                 "Yes!"; "Pickwick's right!"; "Finish the story."

WARDLE                 [pleasant sigh] All right.

                          After Gabriel went missing, someone suggested, purely as a joke, that goblins had snatched him. The jest hadn't passed through four sets of ears, however, before it became gossip that soon rose to the level of sacred truth,

                          And on this, the new sexton, who had a touch of the charlatan about him, sought to capitalize.

SEXTON                 CASE OF MISSING SEXTON SOLVED! GOBLINS PAY A VISIT. WE ARE NOT ALONE! SEE THE PROOF FOR YOURSELF. ONE BOB.

VILLAGER               One bob? Seems pricey.

SEXTON                 Only to skinflints unconcerned about the fate of their former church official.

VILLAGER               Concern fer Gabriel Grub? If yer counting on that to sell tickets, you'll go broke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEXTON Well, if you don't want to hear about Grub, what about the goblins? Surely, you'd like to see the evidence that they were here.

VILLAGER I guess. But a bob?

SEXTON Not a penny less.

VILLAGER Oh, all right...but if you're cheating me, I'll see to it that ever'one knows it.

COIN TOSSED ON TABLE

VILLAGER (CONT 'D) Let's see what ye got.

SEXTON It's right here, under the table.

PIECE OF TIN DROPPED ON TABLE

VILLAGER A broken piece of weather vane? That's your proof goblins were here?

SEXTON Makes everything clear as day.

VILLAGER It does?

SEXTON [impatient sigh] Must I spell it out for you?

Gabriel Grub disappears...I find a piece of the church weather vane on the ground. Coincidence? I don't think so. Clearly, the goblins flew here on a one-eyed winged horse, grabbed Grub, and as they flew off, the horse accidentally kicked off part of the vane.

PAUSE

VILLAGER You don't think the thunderstorm the other night had anything to do with the broken vane do you?

SEXTON Is everyone in this parish as slow on the uptake as you?

PAUSE

VILLAGER Can I have me bob back?

CHUCKLING, LAUGHTER

WARDLE And now, I come to the final scene.

Twenty years or so after Grub disappeared, an old man walked into town. As he shuffled through the streets, he looked around as though familiar with all he saw...but concerned that he not disturb the forgetfulness that had grown over old offenses (CONTINUED)  
(MORE)

At length, he went into a pub where were gathered some locals. After ordering some stout, he asked no one in particular if anyone knew a boy named Ben Britain.

PATRON 1           Ever'one knows Ben Britain; 'e's one of the best we got. Lost 'is father early and 'is mum not long ago.

GABRIEL GRUB       'Ow's 'e doin'?

PATRON 2           'E's fine. Years ago, 'e came into some money, but 'e alwa's shared wha' 'e 'ad with those wha' 'ad less. Freely gained, freely gived, 'e'd say.

PATRON 1           Strange, though...when e'er 'e 'elps someone, he alwa's says, "Compliments o' the goblins."

GABRIEL GRUB       'E says that?

PATRON 2           'E does. Don't know why, ne'er explained, but 'e says it.

WARDLE             The stranger smiled and rose to leave. On the counter he left the only coin he had---a gold sovereign---and then walked out into the gloamin', headed for a path called Coffin Lane.

Up the path to the church graveyard he went and there found a spot where he'd once spent Christmas Eve many years before. Stretching out on the ground---with nothing but the stars above and peace within---he fell asleep.

Sometime during the night, Gabriel Grub awoke and saw before him a brilliant, golden staircase.

Which he climbed...right into the sunrise.

#### SNIFFLING, NOSE BLOWING

WARDLE (CONT'D )   Keeping watch from behind a tombstone was a curious looking on-looker wearing a sugar-loaf hat. When he knew the gravedigger was gone, he removed his hat, made a deep bow and in a whisper of a whisper said,

THE GOBLIN         Your servant, Sir.

WARDLE             When Ben Britain heard an old man had been found dead in the cemetery, he sent word that he'd pay for a proper burial, along with the note, "Compliments of the goblins."

CLOCK CHIMES ONCE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WARDLE (CONT'D ) Oh my! It's past midnight! I've slogged on far too long!

MR. PICKWICK It wasn't a slog, my good Sir; It was a great story greatly told! The night has grown long, but our hearts have grown warm from hearing it. Whenever a man breaks the grip of hate and turns to love, he covers himself with glory.

But it is late and time for us to retire. And on the strength of this good story, let us go home to our beds and dream cherished dreams.

Here's to the stoking of the fire and a new flame come Christmas morning!

MUSIC: *I SAW THREE SHIPS COME SAILING IN*

from "A Goblins' Christmas Carol"

# The Digger's Dirge

Lyrics: Kenny Chumbley

Kyle Shaw

Dm
G<sup>#</sup>°
A
Am
F
G

**Cold and Cruel** (♩ = 40)

Grub

Brave lodg - ings for one, brave lodg - ings for one, A

Gm<sup>7</sup>
B<sup>b</sup>7
A<sup>4</sup> sus4 3
A
B<sup>b</sup>7
A
Am
F
G

6

G.

hole of cold earth, when life is done; A stone at the head, a

12

Gm<sup>7</sup> Bb<sup>7</sup> A<sup>4 sus4 3</sup> A Dm A Am F

G. 8  
stone at the feet, A rich, jui-cy meal for the worms to

17

G Gm<sup>7</sup> Bb<sup>7</sup> A<sup>4 sus4 3</sup> A<sup>7</sup> Dm G<sup>#o</sup> A

G. 8  
eat; Rank grass o-ver-head, and

22

Am F G Bb<sup>Δ</sup> Bb<sup>7</sup> A<sup>4 sus4 3</sup> A<sup>7 #5</sup> A<sup>7</sup> Dm

G. 8  
damp clay a-round, Brave lodg-ings for one in this ho-ly ground.