

A Christmas Carol

By

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based on the novel by Charles Dickens

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A FAMILY in a minivan rolls by with a Christmas tree tied to the top of the car blasting *A Holly Jolly Christmas*. CHILDREN are faintly singing along.

It is snowing lightly and the neighborhood is blanketed with a layer of powdery white snow which glistens under the moonlight.

Every house on the street has beautiful Christmas lights, light up reindeer, Christmas decor, nothing tacky just full of Christmas spirit.

It is a picture perfect Christmas Eve.

We see one house that stands out, very dark, no Christmas decor.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A Holly Jolly Christmas continues to play but gets softer.

BILLY is disheveled, and grimy yet handsome, about 30 years old.

He is holding an OLD FAMILY PHOTO. It is a picture of him as a young boy with an even younger boy next to him, both wearing matching red feety pajamas alongside two happy parents.

Billy flips over the photo and the back says Billy 8, Jimmy 6. He throws the photo aside and begins to snort a line cocaine of the kitchen table.

The kitchen is a mess, there are stacks of dirty dishes in the sink and an overflowing garbage can.

Billy finds a box of cereal on the counter pours it into a bowl, opens a nearly empty fridge, sniffs the contents of a milk carton and pours the remains of it into his cereal bowl.

Billy trudges into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The apartment is small and rundown. There is hardly any decor besides a few baggies of pills scattered throughout the room. It is clear this guy is depressed and probably unemployed.

Billy slumps down onto a lumpy black couch. He is shakes his leg and keeps looking out the window.

He turns on an old TV and flips through Christmas specials. Charlie Brown's Christmas, next, The Santa Claus, next, A Christmas Story, he lets out a big sigh. He flips the channel one more time and...

The doorbell rings.

We see that A Christmas Carol is playing on the TV, Billy does not notice.

Billy runs to the door.

BILLY

Tom, where the fuck have you been?

To his surprise it is not Tom but a group of young Christmas Carolers.

CAROLERS

(Singing)

Silent Night! Holy Night! All is
calm all is bright...round yon
virgin mother and child..

Billy's face fills with pain and he slams the door.

He lumps back down onto the couch and the doorbell rings again. He moves the curtain behind him find a short, less attractive man, TOM, who seems equally grimy.

Billy opens the door.

BILLY

Finally....

TOM

Well I didn't expect you to call me
on Christmas Eve but here.

BILLY

Just another day.

Billy grabs a small bag of white tablets out from Tom's hand and hands him the cash.

(CONTINUED)

Tom starts to walk away but then turns around seeming concerned.

TOM
Look take it easy with those,
they're pretty strong.

Billy nods.

BILLY
Usual time Monday?

TOM
See you then.

Billy shuts the door.

He passes a mirror and looks at his reflection self-loathingly.

He looks down at the tabs and shoves the entire contents of the bag into his mouth.

He sits back down on to the couch. The sound of the TV gets gradually softer and he begins to hallucinate.

Everything becomes blurry. The TV screen is swirling. All of surrounding sounds are muffled and fused together so they are indistinguishable from each other. The furniture and other objects in the room are moving forward and backwards.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Billy is in a pitch black hallway with three doors.

He opens the first one and enters another empty pitch black room.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

Suddenly his 8-YEAR-OLD SELF in the red feety pajamas from the photo runs past him.

BILLY
Hello?

His voice echoes.

The boy does not react and then fades into the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Hello?.... Is anyone here?...Where
am I?

His voice continuously echoes.

An unidentifiable figure in a white robe creeps out from
inside the wall. His face is hidden by the darkness.

Billy is frightened.

BILLY

Who..who are you?

Flames burst out of the walls on either side of him.

The figure's face is revealed he is scary ugly, with a
demented old man face.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

I'm the ghost of Christmas past.
I'm here to show you what you've
done.

Then the man distorts into a TEENAGE BOY who is very strung
out and looks like death.

BILLY

JIMMY?! Is that you? you're al-

JIMMY

No I'm not alive and I don't want
you to end up like me

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Billy knocks on the bathroom door.

BILLY

Jimmy! Let me in!

He continues to knock.

BILLY

Jimmy you've been in there for an
hour.

Billy busts open the door and finds Jimmy unconscious on the
bathroom floor.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

BILLY
JIMMY! JIMMY! Wake Up!

Billy smacks Jimmy in the face a few times. Jimmy makes no movement. Billy frantically puts his ear to Jimmy's chest then puts his fingers on Jimmy's neck and then wrist. No pulse. Billy starts sobbing.

BILLY
Wake up! Wake Up! Please! This is
all my fault!.... It should have
been me.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

We see Billy watching his brother being zipped into a body bag and lifted into a van.

Billy pulls a baggie of pills out of his pocket and swallows them.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy's brother distorts back into the old man.

Billy backs toward the door and we hear the sound of it locking

BILLY
What do you want from me?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST
Oh I don't want anything, but they
do.

BILLY
Who?

The flames are extinguished and the figure disappears.

The walls of this room fall down and are replaced with the walls of a FAMILY ROOM.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Suddenly Billy is in his OLD HOUSE.

An image of Billy passed out on the couch appears.

The walls are covered with girly curtains and decor. Children's toys are scattered around the floor.

A beautiful dark haired woman hurries toward him.

She shakes him and he is unresponsive.

DELIA

Billy! Billy! Wake Up! Billy! Don't
do this to me again! Please wake
up!

Delia starts crying hysterically. She keeps yelling his name frantically.

Billy's DAUGHTER appears looking frightened and holding a worn-out stuffed dog. She is an adorable red-faced 6-year old with curly blonde hair.

Billy opens his eyes and looks confused. Delia is sitting next to him with her head in her hands sobbing.

Billy sits up and puts his hand on her shoulder. She smacks it away.

Delia stands up. Still hysterical and now angry.

DELIA

Get out! Get out! I can't do this
anymore! I keep telling myself you
are gonna stop and were gonna be a
family again...

BILLY

C'mon Delia. Don't do this.

She calms down. And goes from shouting to a whisper.

DELIA

You don't even try.

She hands him her wedding ring and walks out of the room.

Billy heads toward the door.

ABBY is sitting on the staircase near the door, clutching her stuffed animal and hiding from her parents' yelling.

(CONTINUED)

Billy holds the doorknob.

Abby screams.

ABBY

Daddy! Daddy! Don't leave!

Billy kneels down beside her.

BILLY

I have to sweetie, only for a
little while.

Tears run down her face and she hands him her stuffed dog. Billy rubs her head. He is in such a drugged stupor that he does not show any real emotion towards his daughter. He closes the front door behind him.

The family room disappears and changes back into the dark room from before....

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy is slightly teary eyed as he watches.

BILLY

I don't want to see this. Let me
go!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

You may have lost your brother but
he's not the only family you
have. Do you want to put them
through the same pain you went
through? You were given so many
chances to turn your life around
and all you've done is cause them
pain. You owe it to them to change.

BILLY

I don't have to listen to this! Let
me go!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Fine. If that's what you want.

The ground collapses underneath Billy. He falls into a seat
in an EMPTY AUDITORIUM.

INT. EMPTY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A GIANT GHOST MAN with brown curly hair in a green robe appears in front of Billy. He is more human and less ghost-like than the man before.

The man begins to multiply and hundreds of him start to appear in front of Billy, filling up the auditorium.

BILLY
(angrily)
What's going on? Who are you
people?

All the ghosts reply in unison.

GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT
I'm the Ghost of Christmas Present.

BILLY
Let me guess. You guys are here to
tell me to get my family back. Well
save it. They don't want me in
their lives. So why are you doing
this?

All the ghosts disappear besides the one right in front of Billy.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT
You see that's where you are wrong.
They certainly wanted you this
night.

The auditorium goes black. Then the lights begin to turn on slowly. Suddenly the auditorium is full. Billy looks to either side of him confused.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Suddenly Billy is backstage and no one can see him.

Delia is pinning Abby's hair back into a bun.

ABBY
Ouch that hurts Mom!

DELIA
Sorry sweetie I'm almost done. Turn
around.

(CONTINUED)

Delia spins around in a circle.

DELIA
Perfect!

Delia sprays Abby's hair with some hairspray. Then she kisses her on the cheek.

DELIA
You look beautiful and you are going to do great tonight!

ABBY
I hope so! Is Daddy coming?!

DELIA
I wouldn't count on it hunny. He hasn't answered my messages and you know how he is. But I will be cheering you on enough for the both of us!

ABBY
I wish he would come back home.

CHOIR DIRECTOR
Alright it is show time!

The director whisks Abby away.

DELIA
(whispering to herself)
Me too.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Delia is in the crowd clapping and smiling as Abby takes the stage.

Abby scans the audience, doesn't see her Dad and looks disappointed.

She begins to sing.

ABBY
The sun'll come out Tomorrow. Bet
your bottom dollar That tomorrow
There'll be sun! Just thinkin'
about Tomorrow Clears away the
cobwebs, And the sorrow 'Til
there's none!

(CONTINUED)

Just then Billy bursts through the door in a drugged stupor and causes a scene.

BILLY
(shouting)
Is this the talent show?... Abby!

Abby gets flustered by her father's presence and forgets the next line of the song. She gives a nervous bow and runs backstage.

The crowd claps anyway.

FATHER IN THE CROWD
(to Billy)
Get out of here idiot. We are
trying to watch our children.

Billy races towards the Father like he is about to punch him in the face.

BILLY
What the fuck did you just call me?

Two men from the audience grab Billy's arm and push him towards the door.

The whole audience has their eyes on Billy.

Billy fights off the grip of the men to free his arms and storms out of the auditorium.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Delia is talking on the phone, getting in her car and driving away.

DELIA
I was hoping kicking him out would
force him to get his life together.
I'll admit I miss him....but look
at what happened last week. He'll
never change and Abby is really
upset. Its Christmas Eve and God
knows where he is.....Maybe I just
need to let him go for good. Abby
doesn't need a father like that.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The auditorium is empty again and Billy is sitting there looking angry and self-pitying. The Ghost of Christmas Present appears in front of him.

BILLY

Alright I get it. I'm an asshole.
Now will you leave me alone.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

No you don't get it because if you did you would not be sitting here feeling sorry about your terrible life and popping pills! You'd be out getting your family back! Or for starters getting a job and taking a shower, becoming someone who deserves to have them in his life! God dammit at least the shower part. You smell disgusting!

Billy opens his mouth to say something.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

No I don't want to hear any more from you. Get out of my face.

Billy's chair falls through the auditorium floor then disappears. He lands face first in the dirt. He looks up and he is in a creepy desolate and dark woods.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Billy rubs his eyes and gets up from the ground. He walks through the woods and graves start appearing all around him.

He stops in front of a grave that says Jimmy Davis 1984-2001. He kneels down in front of it and reaches out his hand. He looks up and jumps at the sight of the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE.

This ghost has a deformed face that looks like it might have been burned and he has deep batman-like voice. He is much more frightening than the other two ghosts.

Billy is startled. He steps back.

BILLY

(scared and shaking)
Am I in..in..Am I in Hell?

(CONTINUED)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

No but you will be someday.
Fortunately for you I'm not the
devil, I'm the Ghost of Christmas
Future.

BILLY

Why are we in a graveyard?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

Because this is what your future
beholds.

The name on the gravestone fades and is replaced with the
name Billy Davis 1982-2019.

Now it is daytime. The grave is dug up and the casket is on
top ready to be lowered. There is a REVEREND blessing the
body.

Abby is in the car outside the grave site with her arms
crossed. She is hardly the same girl we saw last time. She
is about 15 years-old, and her eyes reflect emptiness far
beyond her years.

Delia looks older, and exhausted, like the life has been
sucked out of her. She is standing outside Abby's window
persuading her to come out.

DELIA

Come on Abby you got to come out.
(Beat)
I know its hard but you'll regret
it if you don't say goodbye.

ABBY

Daddy never said goodbye... and
maybe you're just here because you
feel guilty..IF YOU HADN'T KICKED
HIM OUT HE'D STILL BE ALIVE. You
could have helped him!

Delia turns away so Abby does not see her tears.

DELIA

Come out when you're ready.

She walks into the graveyard and approaches Billy's grave.

DELIA

Can I have a minute alone with him?

The Reverend gives her a funny look.

(CONTINUED)

REVEREND
Of Course.

The Reverend exits the scene.

Delia opens the casket and kneels down besides Billy. She holds his hand and sinks her head into the coffin sobbing.

DELIA
(whispering and barely getting
the words out)
It wasn't your fault... with Jimmy.
... I know you could never live
with yourself after that.. It
wasn't your fault.
(Beat)
But I know this is mine.. because
you needed me... I'm so sorry I
just couldn't see you like that
anymore..I could do that to Abby...
but I never stopped loving you. And
now look what I've done.

Delia continues sobbing.

Abby watches from afar, with sad eyes. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a baggie of pills. She empties them into her hands and swallows them.

Now we see Billy and the Ghost of Christmas Past watching them.

Billy looks completely destroyed. Tears are pouring out of his eyes and he looks like he might die instantly. He says nothing.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE
Have we seen enough?

Billy struggles to let out a nod.

The Ghost fades away and after a second so does everything else.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy wakes up on his couch.

He sees the Christmas Carol playing on TV and looks frighteningly confused.

He shuts off the TV and grabs all the bags of pills around the living room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He enters the kitchen and grabs his cocaine stash from off the table.

Then he opens up the cabinet and removes a pill bottle.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Billy throws all his drugs down the toilet and flushes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He enters his bedroom and we see the stuffed dog Abby gave him in the flashback sitting on his bed. He grabs it and exits the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy rushes through the living room and exits through the front door. He is on a mission.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Billy gets hops his old clunker and starts driving. There is a glimmer of hope in his eyes for the first time.

He approaches a small house with the perfect amount of Christmas decor outside.

Billy gets out of the car and walks up the steps to the front door, holding the stuffed dog.

Billy catches a glimpse of the inside of the house through the window, he goes back down the steps to get a closer look.

Inside the house, there is a giant Christmas tree with lots of presents under it. Delia and Abby are dancing and singing along to *Rocking Around the Christmas Tree*. They look gloriously happy.

Billy watches them for awhile smiling but then starts to look sad.

He drops the dog and slowly backs away from the house.

He gets in his car and drives away.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Billy looks disappointed.

A few seconds later Billy sees the the Ghost of Christmas Past in his rear view mirror. He is sitting in the backseat.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

What are you doing? I thought you were getting your family back?

BILLY

They just look so happy. I don't want to ruin it. I'll only hurt them its what I always do. I don't deserve them.

The Ghost of Christmas Present appears in the passengers seat.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

You're hurting them now, by leaving. You may not deserve them but Delia deserves a husband and Abby a father, despite what you've done they love you and they want you to get the help you need. can you do that?

Billy hesitates.

BILLY

Yes. Yes. I can. I'm gonna get them back.

Billy hears the voice of the Ghost of Christmas Future.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

It's too late. That was your last chance.

Billy looks up and sees the Ghost in the middle of the road. He swerves. Tires screech. He crashes directly into a tree. The accident looks terrible and we do not see Billy get out of the car.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Billy is laying in a hospital bed. The heart monitor is moving in a straight line and making a loud beeping sound showing that his heart isn't beating.

(CONTINUED)

A second later the monitor starts to jump again and beeping normally. His heart is beating again.

Billy opens his eyes slowly. The first thing he sees is Abby's stuffed dog lying on top of him.

ABBY
DADDY! DADDY!

Abby runs towards the bed. We see Delia tearing up in the background.

ABBY
You're okay! I found cuddles so I told him to make sure you got better!

BILLY
Well cuddles did a great job. Merry Christmas sweetie.

ABBY
Merry Christmas Daddy! She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

DELIA
Abby, why don't you go ask that nurse we saw if you can get one of those candy canes on the front desk.

ABBY
Ok Mom!

Abby runs out of the room cheerfully.

BILLY
Delia...

DELIA
You know what. You can save the explanation the doctors already told me what was in your system...You're lucky you didn't kill someone!

She picks up Billy's coat and checks the pockets expecting to find drugs. She is surprised when she finds nothing besides a piece of paper with a handwritten Hopelinks Rehabilitation Center and a phone number.

DELIA

Are you serious about this?

BILLY

Yes Delia, I really am.

Delia shoots him a surprised smile like she's seeing him for the first time again.

DELIA

Well I think that is really great.....You know I thought I heard something outside last night so I went outside and I saw cuddles... Why didn't you come inside?

BILLY

Lets just say I didn't want to ruin the moment.

Delia looks at him like he's an abandoned puppy.

Enter DOCTOR STEVENS.

DOCTOR STEVENS

Alright so you have an acute fracture in both legs. You're going to be in a wheelchair until your legs get strong enough. I'll put you in touch with a great physical therapist and you're going to need a lot of help from your family getting up and down. Other than that everything looks good. Talk about a Christmas miracle, considering the severity of the accident.

Abby comes back in with 3 candy canes in her mouth.

ABBY

What's going on?

DELIA

Daddy is coming home.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Delia is wheeling Billy out of the hospital alongside Abby who is happily still eating the candy canes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

From the outside the window of Delia's house we see Delia, Billy, and Abby sitting around the Christmas tree laughing, smiling and looking like a perfectly happy family.

All three of the Ghosts are standing in the street watching them.

FADE OUT.