

TINY TIM: THE LAST GIFT

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH - DAY - WINTER

Dim morning light filters through stained-glass windows. Candles flicker against stone walls. The air is still with incense and snow-damp wool.

A modest congregation sits in silence.

At the pulpit stands TIMOTHY CRATCHIT (40s) - tall, lean, worn with kindness. His cane rests beside him. His black coat hangs heavy.

He speaks clearly. Calmly.

TIM

When I was a child, I thought Ebenezer Scrooge was the richest man in London.

(beat)

Not because of his money. Because he gave me the chance to live.

A few bowed heads nod.

TIM (CONT'D)

He once told me it's never too late to become who you were meant to be.

(beat)

That redemption isn't earned with words- but with quiet acts of kindness.

Tim's eyes drift to the front pew. An empty seat sits alone - left open.

TIM (CONT'D)

I saw him change. Not because he was forced to... but because he chose to.

(softly)

He became a second father. And I will carry Christmas forward-for him.

EXT. ST. MARTIN'S CHURCHYARD - LATER

Snow falls softly as MOURNERS gather around an open grave.

Tim stands at the front.

A modest apartment. Clean. Sparse. The room holds echoes of someone who once needed very little and kept it that way.

Tim pours a cup of tea. He stands at the window, watching snow gather on the sill.

On a small table:

A leather ledger, its cover worn

A simple portrait of Bob Cratchit and family, sketched in charcoal

The unopened envelope from Scrooge

He stares at it, still untouched.

TIM (V.O.)

He left me the ledger. The same one he used to count coins. He said it wasn't about numbers anymore.

(beat)

He said it was mine.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A warm, cluttered room filled with laughter, plates of roast, and mismatched silverware. The Cratchit siblings—MARTHA (50s), BELINDA (40s), and PETER (50s)—sit around the table.

TIM enters, hanging his scarf. The warmth greets him like memory.

MARTHA

There he is. The man of the hour.

BELINDA

We saved you a seat. You're late.

TIM

I walked.

PETER

Of course he did.

They chuckle. Tim eases into a chair. A plate is passed to him. He nods his thanks.

MARTHA

Heard it was a beautiful service.

TIM

Quiet. Just the way he wanted.

BELINDA
Did they mention the Foundation?

TIM
Briefly.

PETER
You know they'll come sniffing now.
City officials. People wanting to
rename the whole thing.

BELINDA
"The Ebenezer Scrooge Memorial
Hall."

TIM
They'll try. But he didn't do this
for plaques.

A beat of silence. Belinda pours cider for everyone.

MARTHA
He changed everything, didn't he?

TIM
He did.

BELINDA
And now they'll expect you to be
him.

TIM (SOFTLY)
I'm not.

PETER
No. You're the one he *chose*.

Tim nods, but he doesn't smile.

TIM (V.O.)
I don't know if I believe in fate.
But I do believe in gifts.
(beat)
The kind that come with weight.

CUT TO: INT. TIM'S FLAT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The envelope sits by the fire. Unopened.

Tim stares at it. His hand reaches for it—then withdraws.

He pours himself another cup of tea.

TIM (V.O.)
 I wasn't ready to open it.
 Because once I did... I'd have to
 carry what was inside.

The stone reads:

EBENEZER SCROOGE - A Friend to All

No fanfare. Just the quiet sound of snowfall.

He lingers as the crowd begins to thin.

In his hand is a sealed envelope.

TO TIMOTHY CRATCHIT - FOR CHRISTMAS EVE. ONE LAST GIFT.

He tucks it into his coat pocket. Stares at the stone.

TIM (V.O.)
 I suppose it falls to me now.
 (beat)
 To keep Christmas.
 (beat)
 To carry it forward.

He turns. Walks through the snow alone.

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EXT. CRATCHIT FOUNDATION - MORNING

Snow still dusts the streets. A modest brick building sits on the corner of Mill and Broad — its windows aglow, its iron sign swinging softly:

THE CRATCHIT FOUNDATION

Warmth for the Forgotten

Inside, sounds of clinking teacups, the thump of boots, and laughter from children echo within.

INT. CRATCHIT FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Warm light fills the space. Blankets folded in bins. A kettle hisses. Gloves hang drying by a fire.

GRACE (50s), practical, warm-eyed, and sharp as frost, ties an apron around her waist while organizing bread trays.

NATHAN (30s), quick-witted and soft-hearted under layers of wool, carries firewood past her.

NATHAN
You know we're going to run out of
cider before noon.

GRACE
Then dilute it with charm. We're
running low on that too.

He grins. Then—

GRACE (CONT'D)
Where is he?

NATHAN
Mourning.

GRACE
Still?

NATHAN (GENTLY)
He buried a man who gave him a
life.

Grace softens.

GRACE
Well, life doesn't stop just
because someone else's did.

NATHAN
Don't tell that to Tim. He still
thinks the ledger has answers.

GRACE
It doesn't. It just has names.

INT. FOUNDATION - MOMENTS LATER

The front door opens. Tim enters, dusting snow from his coat.
He's weary but upright.

Grace walks over, handing him a cup of hot tea.

GRACE
You're late.

TIM
It's a theme.

NATHAN
You look like you fought the grave
and lost.

TIM
I buried the grave.

He sips. They watch him with quiet concern.

GRACE
You haven't opened it yet.

TIM
I will.

GRACE
He trusted you with it.

TIM (QUIETLY)
That's what I'm afraid of.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER THAT DAY

The back door creaks open. A GIRL (11), in an oversized sweater and boots two sizes too big, steps quietly into the room.

She carries a satchel. Her eyes dart—sharp, alert, prepared for disappointment.

This is JULIA.

She says nothing. Just observes.

NATHAN (O.S.)
You looking for something?

She startles. Clutches her satchel.

JULIA
Someone told me a Cratchit runs
this place.

NATHAN
He does.

JULIA
Is he here?

NATHAN (SOFTLY)
Always is.

INT. FOUNDATION - MOMENTS LATER

Tim kneels near the stove, sorting gloves by size. He hears footsteps but doesn't look up.

JULIA (O.S.)
You the one who used to be Tiny?

He turns.

Their eyes meet.

TIM
I suppose I still am. Just not in
size.

JULIA
My mum said you saved Christmas
once.

TIM
She was kind to say that.

JULIA
She didn't say it like a
compliment.

A beat. Tim straightens slowly.

TIM
Would you like to stay for supper?

JULIA (GUARDED)
That depends. Do you ask everyone
who walks in?

TIM
Only the ones who look like they
might not ask for it themselves.

A long pause.

She nods once.

INT. FOUNDATION - KITCHEN AREA - NIGHT

Plates clink. A fire crackles. Tim stirs a pot of stew. Julia sits at the far end of the long table, sipping from a chipped mug, her satchel still strapped over her shoulder.

Grace dries spoons by the hearth, eyes flicking occasionally to the girl.

GRACE (LOW)
She say where she came from?

TIM
Just that someone told her I used
to be small.

GRACE
She's half ice. The other half's
looking for a reason to melt.

TIM
She hasn't asked for anything.

GRACE
That's the kind you watch closest.

Julia coughs softly. Tim brings her a second slice of bread.

JULIA
You always feed strangers?

TIM
Just the ones who sit still long
enough.

JULIA (BEAT)
I don't steal.

TIM
Good. I don't chase.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER

The room has emptied. Tim sits alone now, the envelope from Scrooge in his hand.

He turns it over. Reads the name again.

TO TIMOTHY CRATCHIT - FOR CHRISTMAS EVE. ONE LAST GIFT.

He opens a drawer. Places it inside. Closes it.

INT. FOUNDATION - BEDROOM LOFT - LATER

Julia sleeps on a cot under a heavy blanket. One boot dangles from the edge. Her satchel rests on her chest.

From downstairs, soft murmurs—Tim and Grace talking near the fire.

GRACE (O.S.)
You're not her father.

TIM (O.S.)
I know that.

GRACE (O.S.)
But you're the first man who hasn't
walked away.

TIM (O.S., AFTER A BEAT)
That's not nothing.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Tim stands in front of the ledger. His fingers hover over the cover. He doesn't open it.

Instead, he pulls a small slip of paper from his pocket—Scrooge's original handwriting, faded and folded:

"When the day comes you doubt yourself... find someone else to carry it."

Tim closes the drawer.

He's not ready to carry it.

And he's not ready to pass it.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Julia sits at the table folding gloves into pairs. She's quiet, focused, deliberate. The rising sun filters through frost-covered windows.

Nathan walks past, carrying a box of canned goods.

NATHAN
Morning, soldier.

JULIA
I'm not a soldier.

NATHAN
Sure you are. You showed up.
(nods at the gloves)
You always fold like that?

JULIA (WITHOUT LOOKING UP)
I fold so they don't lose each other.

Nathan pauses.

NATHAN (SOFTLY)
That's a good reason.

Tim stands nearby, unseen. He watches her quietly.

TIM (V.O.)
There are those who ask for the gifts! And those who carry it before they even know what it is.
(beat)
She hadn't asked for anything.
(MORE)

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But I'd already started seeing her
name.

FADE OUT.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Tim stands by the front window, watching snow swirl beyond
the glass. The room is mostly quiet.

Grace approaches with a folded note in her hand.

GRACE
Donation came in. Anonymous. Ten
pounds and a basket of socks.

TIM
We take kindness in all
denominations.

Grace hands him the note. Tim reads it. A faint smile.

GRACE
You open the letter yet?

TIM
No.

GRACE
Why?

TIM
Because I know what it means when I
do.

GRACE
That he's gone?

TIM
That I'm next.

A beat. Grace softens.

GRACE
You don't have to do it alone, Tim.

TIM
I know. But I think he meant me to
try first.

He walks off, the envelope still unopened in his coat pocket.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

Tim sits at the desk. The envelope lies in front of him.

He takes a breath, breaks the seal.

Inside: a single folded page in Scrooge's tight, careful script.

SCROOGE (V.O.)

You were never small, my boy. Only growing.

I gave you what I could—but you gave it meaning.

The ledger is yours now. The gift is no longer mine to carry.

Write in it. Or don't. Either way, the gift goes on.

Tim closes his eyes. Exhales.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Julia sits by the fire. Her boots are off. She holds a folded paper star in her hands, inspecting it, then unfolding it and starting over.

Tim enters slowly.

TIM

Your mother ever tell you stories?

Julia nods, still folding.

JULIA

About a man who gave away everything.

TIM

Was it a warning?

JULIA

A wish.

She holds up the finished star. It's lopsided. She doesn't seem to mind.

JULIA (CONT'D)

She said the world gets smaller at Christmas.

Said if I ever found the man who kept giving, I should stay.

Tim kneels beside her, not close, but not far.

TIM
You found him?

JULIA
I think so.

She places the star on the table beside them.

Silence.

TIM (V.O.)
It wasn't the ledger that carried
the gift.
It was the hands brave enough to
hold it.

NT. FOUNDATION - LOBBY - NEXT MORNING

The front bell jingles as an OLDER WOMAN enters, holding a dented kettle and a faded scarf.

Julia is the first to greet her.

JULIA
Tea's hot. Mittens are dry. And no
questions asked.

The woman smiles, surprised.

OLDER WOMAN
You in charge?

Julia shrugs.

JULIA
Depends on the hour.

Grace watches from across the room, folding linens. She nods to herself.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Tim stares at the open ledger. Blank page. Pen in hand.

He hesitates. Dips the pen.

Nothing.

Grace enters quietly, holding a steaming cup.

GRACE
Writing your memoir?

TIM
Starting it.

GRACE
That book's not about you.

TIM
That's the problem.

GRACE
Then make it about her.

She nods toward the main room. Julia laughs softly in the distance.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Julia sorts donated socks by size. Nathan enters with a crate of apples.

NATHAN
That your system or Cratchit's?

JULIA
Mine.

NATHAN
Then it's the right one.

He places a shiny red apple on the table in front of her. She eyes him suspiciously.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Bribe. So you don't put me on tea duty again.

Julia takes the apple.

JULIA
You're already on tea duty.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tim finally writes in the ledger.

TIM (V.O.)
Julia - folds socks by instinct,
gives warmth without asking if it's
hers to give.

He closes the book, slowly.

TIM (V.O.)
Some gifts don't need ceremony.

They only need eyes to see them.

INT. FOUNDATION - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Julia sits on the stairs, holding the red apple. Grace sits beside her, quiet.

GRACE
You planning to stay long?

Julia shrugs.

JULIA
I've left a lot of places. This one hasn't asked me to yet.

Grace smiles, half-wry.

GRACE
It won't. That's the trick of it.

Julia looks down at the apple. Quiet.

JULIA
He scares me sometimes.

GRACE
Tim?

JULIA
No. The part of me that wants to be like him.

Grace says nothing. That's answer enough.

EXT. FOUNDATION - STREET - MORNING

A trio of young carolers stand huddled beneath a gaslamp, scarves up to their noses, singing off-key:

CAROLERS (O.S.)
God rest ye merry, gentlemen...

They sway slightly with the rhythm, trying to stay warm. A bell ringer nearby shakes a tin half-heartedly.

Snow falls lightly.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front window is fogged at the corners. Inside, garlands of pine boughs loop over the doorways. Red ribbons hang from beams. Handmade paper stars and mittens dangle above the hearth.

Julia strings popcorn at a long table, working methodically. Beside her, a small child colors with chalk.

NATHAN

That your system or Cratchit's?

JULIA

Mine.

NATHAN

Then it's the right one.

He places a shiny red apple on the table in front of her.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Bribe. So you don't put me on tea duty again.

JULIA

You're already on tea duty.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Tim opens the ledger. He stares at a blank page, pen hovering.

GRACE (O.S.)

It's quieter this year.

She leans in the doorway, sipping cider.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You used to hum carols under your breath while writing.

TIM

Scrooge hated carolers.

GRACE

He changed.

TIM

So did the world.

He finally writes.

TIM (V.O.)
 Julia - folds socks by instinct,
 gives warmth without asking if it's
 hers to give.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Children make paper snowflakes and tape them to the windows.

A small tree, donated and sparse, stands in the corner,
 wrapped with red yarn and stars. Julia carefully hangs a
 single mitten on one of its branches.

Outside, the carolers continue faintly:

CAROLERS (O.S.)
 O tidings of comfort and joy...

Tim enters, pausing to take it all in.

He smiles - faint, but real.

INT. FOUNDATION - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Julia sits on the stairs, the red apple untouched in her lap.
 Grace joins her.

GRACE
 You planning to stay long?

JULIA
 I've left a lot of places. This one
 hasn't asked me to yet.

GRACE
 It won't. That's the trick of it.

Julia looks toward the firelight spilling from the main room.

JULIA
 He scares me sometimes.

GRACE
 Tim?

JULIA
 No. The part of me that wants to be
 like him.

Grace smiles gently.

GRACE

That part's the one worth listening
to.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

Through the frosted windows, we see children laughing, Nathan hanging a crooked wreath, and Tim kneeling to help a boy tie his boot.

Julia stands just inside the door, watching it all.

Then slowly, she hangs a paper star on the front door.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - NEXT MORNING

A man in a threadbare coat stands at the front counter, gruff and impatient. He slams his hand on the bell.

ROUGH MAN

What's the holdup? It's freezing
out there.

Julia appears from the back room, holding a tray of warm rolls.

JULIA

You'll want two. The cinnamon's
fresher.

The man blinks, thrown off.

ROUGH MAN

You new here?

JULIA

Not anymore.

He takes the roll, muttering.

Grace watches from the stairs, eyebrows raised.

GRACE

You handling belligerent strangers
now?

JULIA

Only before breakfast.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Tim flips through a ledger entry. He pauses, squints - his eyes blur slightly.

He rubs them, frustrated. Closes the book.

Grace enters with two mugs of tea. She notices.

GRACE

You let her take the front room
this morning.

TIM

I didn't assign it. She took it.

GRACE

Same difference.

TIM

She's bold.

GRACE

She's careful. There's a
difference.

Tim doesn't answer. He sips his tea. Long beat.

TIM

I'm slowing down.

GRACE

Then maybe it's time to teach
someone how to keep the pace.

INT. FOUNDATION - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Julia stands with Nathan, sorting canned goods.

NATHAN

You keep acting like you live here.

JULIA

I keep getting fed here.

NATHAN

You trust people?

JULIA

Not really.
But I trust this place.

INT. FOUNDATION - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Tim sits alone, half in shadow. Grace joins him.

GRACE

You ever think about what happens
if you stop?

TIM

Every day.

GRACE

What would he have done?

TIM

He'd have fought to the end.

GRACE

No.
He'd have found someone to carry
it.

Beat.

TIM

I think she's already carrying part
of it.

GRACE

Then let her know.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Tim wraps his scarf. Nathan adjusts his coat.

GRACE

You sure you want to leave?

TIM

I need an hour. Maybe two.

He turns to Julia, who's drying dishes behind the front
counter.

TIM (CONT'D)

That make you nervous?

JULIA

Only if you're expecting it to be
perfect.

TIM

I'm expecting it to stay standing.

GRACE
 You'll be back before the tea goes
 cold.

He gives Julia a faint smile and steps out into the snow.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER

A YOUNG GIRL (7) stands near the fireplace, sniffing. Her coat is wet, her hands bare.

Julia kneels in front of her.

JULIA
 What's your name?

GIRL
 Ellie.

Julia holds out a pair of red mittens - one torn, but clean.

JULIA
 They're not new. But they're warm.

The girl takes them and tugs them on. Julia helps, gently.

GIRL
 Are you the one in charge?

Julia hesitates.

JULIA
 Today, I guess I am.

GIRL
 You're nice.

Julia looks away quickly - caught off guard.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - SAME TIME

Tim sits at the desk. He pulls out a faded green notebook - older than the ledger, dog-eared at the corners.

He flips to the first page. Reads silently.

SCROOGE (V.O.)
 Write down what you see.
 Not numbers. People.
 Start there.

Tim turns the page.

TIM (V.O.)

Bob - works too hard. Smiles too easily. Deserves a rest.

He closes the notebook. His eyes glisten - but no tears fall.

He places the notebook on top of the closed ledger.

And leaves them both there.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Julia sweeps near the door. The wreath has slipped sideways. She straightens it.

She glances toward the office.

No Tim.

She walks in.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She finds the notebook and ledger side by side on the desk.

A small folded note sits between them:

"It starts with one name."

She runs her fingers over the ledger's leather cover.

But she doesn't open it yet.

She simply sits.

And breathes.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATE EVENING

Julia still sits at the desk. The note rests beside the closed ledger. She hasn't touched either for a while.

Outside the door, she hears soft laughter. Nathan is telling a story to the kids by the fire.

She finally opens the ledger.

Blank page.

She hesitates.

Then slowly, deliberately, writes:

JULIA (V.O.)
 Ellie - wore red mittens too big
 for her.

Didn't take them off. Not even to eat.

She stops. Frowns.

Then adds:

JULIA (V.O.)
 That's how you know she wanted to
 stay.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Tim enters quietly, watching from the doorway as Julia helps
 a boy lace his boot.

TIM (V.O.)
 The gift doesn't pass with
 speeches.
 It passes when no one's watching.

He walks to the fire, removes his gloves. Warms his hands.

JULIA
 You left it on purpose.

TIM
 The ledger?

JULIA
 The note.

TIM
 You weren't supposed to find it.
 Unless you were ready.

She doesn't respond. She doesn't need to.

INT. FOUNDATION - BACK ROOM - AFTERNOON

Julia and Grace sort linens into bins labeled by size.

GRACE
 He left it for you?

JULIA
 Maybe.

GRACE
Did you write?

JULIA
One name.

GRACE
That's enough to start.

They fold in silence. Outside, faint carols echo from the street again.

INT. TIM'S FLAT - NIGHT

Tim sits by the fire, staring at the green notebook and the ledger stacked together.

He picks up the green one. Runs his fingers over Scrooge's initials on the inside cover.

TIM (V.O.)
He wrote in silence.

But everything he gave made noise.

He closes the book. Sets it down.

The fire crackles softly beside him.

He closes his eyes.

INT. DREAM SPACE - NIGHT (IMPRESSIONISTIC)

Shadows move like candlelight on stone.

A figure steps into frame: EBENEZER SCROOGE. Older, but warm. Still sharp around the edges. He wears a black coat and a soft grey scarf.

He stands near Tim - who is now younger, watching from a memory.

SCROOGE
Still afraid?

Tim doesn't speak.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
It was never meant to be yours forever, Tim.

TIM
You trusted me with it.

SCROOGE
Because I saw someone who could
carry it.
But you... you've seen someone who
can continue it.

He places a hand gently on Tim's shoulder.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
You gave it meaning.

SCROOGE (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)
Now let it go.

INT. TIM'S FLAT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Tim wakes, slowly. The fire is dying.

He looks at the ledger on the table.

After a long moment. He smiles

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - DAY

The air smells of cinnamon and pine. A fresh string of paper
snowflakes hangs above the hearth. A knock at the door.

Julia opens it.

Standing in the snow is a woman in her late 70s, well-dressed
but modest. Her eyes are sharp and warm.

BELLE
I'm not too early, am I?

JULIA
For what?

BELLE (SMILING)
To drop these off.

She steps in, handing over a large bag of wool scarves.

Grace appears from the back.

GRACE
Belle?

BELLE
It's me. Still meddling. Still
mending.

They embrace.

Tim steps into view.

He freezes, almost startled.

TIM
Belle.

BELLE
Timothy Cratchit. You're taller
than I remember.

TIM
You remember?

BELLE
You used to wait for Ebenezer
outside the counting house. You had
a blue scarf and no gloves.

JULIA
You knew Scrooge?

BELLE
We... were once something. Long ago.
Before he changed.
But he changed for real. I saw it.

TIM
You came to his service.

BELLE
I did. Quietly. But yes.

She turns to Julia, studying her.

BELLE (CONT'D)
Are you the one writing in the
ledger now?

JULIA
Sometimes.

BELLE
Then I want to give you a name.

Julia pulls a small notebook from her apron pocket.

BELLE (CONT'D)

My brother. Ebenezer forgave his debt. Didn't announce it. Just... tore up the note. That one act gave my brother ten more good years.

JULIA (WRITING SOFTLY)

"Peter - given a second chance. Used every day of it."

BELLE (QUIETLY)

That's the gift, dear. It spreads.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Tim sits across from Grace.

TIM

It's strange seeing her again.

GRACE

She didn't come for him. She came for you.

Tim looks toward the doorway where Julia just passed by, notebook still in hand.

GRACE (CONT'D)

And maybe her too.

Tim doesn't respond.

But he doesn't need to.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - AFTERNOON

A WOMAN (60s) stands near the fireplace, hands wrapped around a paper parcel. Her clothes are simple but clean. Julia approaches, cautious but kind.

JULIA

Looking for something?

WOMAN

No, dear. Just bringing this.

She hands Julia the parcel.

JULIA

What is it?

WOMAN

Loaves. From my oven. For anyone
who needs them.

Julia tilts her head. Curious.

JULIA

You've been here before?

WOMAN

Years ago. When my husband lost his
job.
Your Mr. Scrooge let us keep our
home. Quietly. No announcement.

JULIA

What was his name?

WOMAN

Martin. He passed two winters ago.
But the roof Ebenezer saved... we
raised three children under it.

Julia smiles gently.

JULIA (V.O.)

Martin - built warmth on borrowed
time.
Paid it forward in bread.

She looks to the side where the ledger sits half-hidden on
the shelf.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Tim sorts through envelopes.

One stands out - official city stationery. He opens it.

GRACE (O.S.)

You get summoned?

TIM

Dedication ceremony.
They're putting the plaque up
outside the Foundation.

GRACE

They want you to speak?

Tim doesn't answer. That's answer enough.

Grace watches him.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You always said it was about the gift. Not the glory.

TIM

I know.

GRACE

Then why are you afraid of being seen?

He doesn't answer. Not yet.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

A small BOY (6) sits on the floor, crying softly. Julia kneels beside him.

JULIA

What's wrong?

BOY

I lost one of my socks.

JULIA

Is that all?

BOY

My dad says if I lose things, I won't get new ones.

Julia pulls off her own second pair of socks - warm, red.

She helps him slip them on.

JULIA

Let's not call them "new."
Let's call them "next."

The boy snuffles, nods.

Tim watches this from across the room. Something shifts behind his eyes.

INT. TIM'S FLAT - LATE NIGHT

Tim sits in silence. The envelope from the city rests beside him.

He looks at the ledger.

Then at the green notebook.

He closes his eyes.
The fire crackles.
His breathing slows.
And the room darkens...

INT. TIM'S FLAT - NIGHT

The room is nearly dark. Only the fire flickers.
Tim sleeps in the chair. Ledger in his lap. Green notebook resting on the armrest.
His breathing deepens.

INT. DREAM - COUNTING HOUSE - NIGHT (MEMORY/IMPRESSIONISTIC)

Flickering candlelight. The old counting house - cramped, cold, and lined with ledgers.
A young Tim (12) sits on a stool beside the stove, watching an older man scribble at a desk.
EBENEZER SCROOGE (late 60s), not yet warm but no longer cruel, looks up over his glasses.

SCROOGE
You'll sit. Watch. Learn.

YOUNG TIM
What am I watching for?

SCROOGE
Mistakes. They're easier to spot when they're not your own.

The boy nods.

DREAM DISSOLVES TO: FOUNDATION - EMPTY - NIGHT

Tim stands alone in the Foundation. Everything is silent. Dark.

A door creaks behind him.

SCROOGE (O.S.)
Still waiting to write your own name?

Tim turns.

Scrooge stands in the doorway – older, softened by time, wrapped in the same scarf he wore the last time Tim saw him.

Not ghostly. Just... present.

TIM

I never thought I'd see you again.

SCROOGE

I never thought I'd be worth remembering.

A beat.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)

You've carried it longer than I did.

TIM

It felt heavier this year.

SCROOGE

That's how you know it's time.

Tim looks down.

TIM

I don't know if she's ready.

SCROOGE

Then look again.

He steps closer. Places a hand on Tim's shoulder.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)

The gift was never the book.

It was the courage to see people.

TIM

What if I stop seeing them?

SCROOGE

Then make sure she never does.

Tim closes his eyes. Breathes.

When he opens them...

INT. TIM'S FLAT - DAWN

The fire is dying.

The ledger still rests on his lap.

He looks down at it. Then up. Peaceful.

INT. FOUNDATION - EARLY MORNING

Julia ties a garland across the windows.

Children stir sleepily around the hearth.

She gently nudges a blanket over a dozing girl.

Nathan watches her from the stairs.

NATHAN

You ever stop moving?

JULIA

Does the place ever stop needing?

Grace arrives carrying a crate of donations.

GRACE

We've got a full day. City's coming
by with that plaque schedule.

Julia nods. Ties the last loop of ribbon in place.

She looks toward the office.

The door is closed. But the space no longer feels... waiting.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Julia opens the door.

The ledger sits open on the desk.

A pen rests beside it.

She smiles.

Then writes.

FADE OUT.

INT. TIM'S FLAT - NIGHT

The fire glows low. Tim sits in silence, the ledger closed on his lap.

He leans back in his chair. Eyes heavy.

The room fades.

INT. COUNTING HOUSE - DREAM - NIGHT

Flickering candlelight. A desk, an abacus, a leather-bound ledger.

EBENEZER SCROOGE (70s) sits in the shadows, writing with steady precision.

Tim, now younger - perhaps in his 20s - stands in the doorway, uncertain.

SCROOGE

You kept it longer than I did.

TIM

I didn't mean to.

SCROOGE

That's how you know you were the right choice.

He rises. Paces slowly.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)

The gift wasn't the book, Tim.
It was the way you looked at the world. Like everyone deserved warmth.

Tim hesitates.

TIM

I thought I'd know when to let it go.

SCROOGE

You do.

Tim blinks.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)

You just haven't accepted that knowing is enough.

Scrooge moves closer. His eyes are kind.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
You gave the gift a longer life
than I ever could.

TIM
She's still a child.

SCROOGE
So was I when I lost myself.
So were you when you found me.

Tim's hand rests on the ledger – now glowing faintly in the dream space.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
Give it to her. Before she needs to
carry it alone.

INT. TIM'S FLAT – EARLY MORNING

Tim wakes slowly. The fire has nearly gone out.

He looks at the ledger.

Then smiles – tired, but calm.

INT. FOUNDATION – MAIN ROOM – MORNING

Children run through with folded paper stars.

Julia directs them gently, guiding them toward a pine branch arch hung across the hearth.

Nathan enters with a fresh bucket of coal.

NATHAN
Didn't think you'd be here this
early.

JULIA
Didn't want to miss anything.

Grace passes, holding a basket of dried fruit.

GRACE
The mayor's secretary called.
Dedication's the twenty-fourth.

NATHAN
You gonna speak, Jules?

Julia doesn't answer. Just keeps working.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Tim enters slowly.

He finds the ledger on the desk - open to the page Julia wrote days ago.

Julia - folds socks by instinct. Gives warmth without asking if it's hers to give.

He adds a line beneath it.

Tim - watched long enough. Now it's her turn.

He signs only:

T.C.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - DUSK

The fireplace glows.

Julia reads softly to two small children curled in blankets.

Outside, bells ring faintly in the street.

Tim watches her from the stairwell.

She looks up.

Smiles.

He nods.

And walks away.

INT. FOUNDATION - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Tim reaches the landing. He places a folded note beneath the lantern sconce.

Julia - Don't wait for permission. Just begin.

He walks slowly up the stairs.

FADE OUT.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Chaos.

A pipe has burst somewhere behind the wall. Water pools near the pantry. Nathan tries to jam a broom into the flow.

NATHAN

It's like trying to plug a dam with
a sock!

Grace rushes in with towels.

Julia is already directing two teens with mops and a bucket brigade.

JULIA

Sophie—get every dry towel we have.
Marcus—push the tables back. Keep
the boots dry.

Tim watches from the hallway, unseen.

She doesn't panic.

She manages.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Grace wrings out her sleeves beside the window.

GRACE

If you ask me, that girl's more
Cratchit than Cratchit.

Tim smiles faintly.

TIM

She didn't flinch.

GRACE

She led.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - AFTERNOON

The cleanup has finished. The room is dry. A few children help Julia re-hang the paper stars.

NATHAN

City just confirmed the plaque for
the twenty-fourth. Mayor's coming.

JULIA
You think Tim's actually going to
speak?

NATHAN
If he doesn't, they might ask you.

Julia freezes for a second.

Then keeps tying the ribbon.

INT. FOUNDATION - BACK ROOM - SAME

Tim opens a small drawer.

Inside: a pair of old spectacles, a broken pencil, a faded
envelope marked:

Forgiveness - 1843

He closes the drawer again.

Just holds it for a moment.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

A man stands outside the gate. Older. Worn coat. In his 70s.

Julia opens the door and sees him.

JULIA
Can I help you?

MAN
Used to be a debtor.
Scrooge let my father off the hook.
Changed everything.

He looks up at the wreath on the door.

MAN (CONT'D)
Just wanted to see what grew from
it.

She nods. Gently.

JULIA
You're welcome to come in.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Tim sits with the green notebook open beside the ledger.

He writes:

TIM (V.O.)
His gift spread beyond his years.
And mine spread beyond my reach.

He signs it.

Closes the book.

And blows out the candle.

FADE OUT.

INT. FOUNDATION - SUPPLY CLOSET - NIGHT

Tim rummages through an old crate of records. Nathan leans against the doorframe, arms crossed.

NATHAN
Looking for anything in particular?

TIM
No. Just... listening.

NATHAN
To what?

TIM
The sound of a place that doesn't
need me anymore.

Nathan steps inside. Picks up a small brass bell.

NATHAN
Places don't stop needing. They
just need differently.

Tim looks up.

TIM
You'll watch over her?

NATHAN
She doesn't need watching.

Beat.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
But yeah. I will.

They share a rare, quiet moment.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Children play in the corner. Julia stands at the window, watching workers prep scaffolding outside for the city's dedication plaque.

Grace approaches, holding a clipboard.

GRACE
City wants someone to speak tomorrow. They're still hoping it's Tim.

JULIA
He won't.

GRACE
Then maybe you should.

Julia hesitates.

JULIA
What would I even say?

Grace studies her.

GRACE
Say what he gave you.

INT. FOUNDATION - FRONT DESK - LATER

A small GIRL (8) hands Julia a folded card made of construction paper.

GIRL
This is for the lady who gave my mum mittens and didn't ask why we needed them.

Julia opens the card. A crayon drawing of Julia standing beside a tree. Stars above her head.

She folds it carefully. Doesn't speak.

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

Tim stands before a modest stone.

EBENEZER SCROOGE - A Friend to All

Fresh snow rests lightly on the name.

Tim places a folded piece of paper at the base.

TIM (V.O.)

I saw her, Ebenezer.

(beat)

And she sees them now.

He turns and walks away, cane quiet against the stone path.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Julia enters to find the office empty. On the desk, the green notebook and ledger sit side by side.

A note rests atop them:

"If you're reading this, then I'm already where I need to be."

She sits slowly. Places the crayon card beside the note.

Takes a breath.

Then opens the ledger.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - NIGHT

The tree is lit. Ribbons flutter. Workers adjust scaffolding as snow begins to fall.

A cloth covers the bronze plaque.

A small stage waits.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER THAT NIGHT

Julia stands at the window, looking out at the lights across the street.

Grace joins her, sipping tea.

GRACE

Think you'll know what to say
tomorrow?

JULIA

No.

(beat)

But I know why I'm saying it.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - CHRISTMAS EVE - AFTERNOON

A light snow falls.

A small crowd has gathered outside the Cratchit Foundation, bundled in coats and scarves. The plaque remains covered by a dark cloth.

Paper lanterns glow softly along the edges of the square. The city's MAYOR (50s) stands beside a podium, flipping through note cards.

Julia stands off to the side. Grace is nearby.

GRACE

They're still hoping Tim shows up.

JULIA

He won't.

GRACE

Then you better say something worth remembering.

Julia swallows hard. Nods.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

The Mayor steps to the mic.

MAYOR

Good evening, friends and neighbors. Thank you for braving the cold. Tonight we honor two names that have come to mean something more than charity. We honor those who gave us a gift—and taught us how to pass it on.

He gestures to Julia.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

And we ask someone who knew them
both... to speak on their behalf.

Julia steps forward slowly.

The mic wobbles. She adjusts it.

The crowd quiets.

She takes a long breath.

JULIA

I didn't know Ebenezer Scrooge.
Not the way most of you did.
But I knew the life he made
possible.

(beat)

I knew Tim Cratchit. And I watched
him give warmth to strangers... every
day without asking anything back.

She holds up a small folded paper star.

JULIA (CONT'D)

He told me once that the gift isn't
the food or the gloves.
It's the part of you that sees
someone else's need—and doesn't
wait for permission to help.

A hush settles over the square.

JULIA (CONT'D)

If you're here tonight, you've
already received that gift.

And maybe it's time to carry it.

She steps back.

The crowd stays silent—then soft applause ripples through.

EXT. FOUNDATION WALL - MOMENTS LATER

The Mayor pulls the cloth from the bronze plaque. It gleams
in the snowlight.

ENGRAVED:

IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SAW US WHEN WE WERE INVISIBLE

EBENEZER SCROOGE - Who Changed

TIMOTHY CRATCHIT - Who Believed

Let the gift continue.

The crowd applauds again—stronger now.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER THAT EVENING

The fireplace crackles. Children sip cider. A paper star mobile spins gently above the hearth.

Julia walks in, still holding her speech.

Grace watches from across the room.

GRACE

You didn't stutter.

JULIA

I forgot to breathe.

GRACE

They didn't notice.

A little girl runs up and wraps her arms around Julia's leg.

LITTLE GIRL

I liked your story.

Julia bends, hugs her.

JULIA

Thank you. It's still being written.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Julia places the folded speech and star on the desk beside the ledger.

She opens the book.

Writes slowly.

JULIA (V.O.)

Scrooge - saw beyond coin and counted kindness instead.

Tim - never stopped giving, even when it hurt.

Both believed. So I do too.

She closes the book.

The fire glows behind her.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The crowd remains still as the plaque glows under the lantern light. Snowflakes fall silently.

A child reaches out to touch the engraved name:

TIMOTHY CRATCHIT - Who Believed

Julia kneels to her level.

JULIA

Do you know who he was?

CHILD

I think he gave me soup once.

Julia smiles softly.

JULIA

Then you know enough.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER THAT EVENING

Tim walks quietly through the darkened main room. Most of the guests are gone. Just a few lanterns still flicker.

He pauses at the hearth, gazing at the framed drawing of Scrooge and the original Foundation charter.

He places a small envelope beneath it.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Julia returns to the desk. She finds a second note, handwritten in Tim's careful hand:

"You don't need my name anymore. Just yours."

Next to it, the ledger is closed—but the green notebook is gone.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - EARLY MORNING

A soft fog hugs the edges of the platform. Tim, coat buttoned high, stands alone.

No suitcase. Just his cane and a folded scarf tucked into his pocket.

A distant whistle echoes.

He watches the train approach, eyes misty but calm.

TIM (V.O.)
The gift never ends.
It simply finds new hands to carry
it.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Children crowd around a long table, folding paper stars.

Julia moves among them, calm, confident, her sleeves rolled.

Grace watches from the doorway.

GRACE
He's gone?

JULIA
He's where he needs to be.

Grace nods.

GRACE
And you?

Julia picks up a star. Smiles.

JULIA
Exactly where I belong.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - EVENING

Julia sits alone with the ledger open.

She writes:

JULIA (V.O.)
To carry the gift...
is not to hold it tight.
It is to pass it—without letting go
of its meaning.

She sets the pen down.

Closes the book.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

A fresh paper star spins in the window.

The plaque catches firelight as snow falls.

Children laugh inside.

TIM (V.O.)
Let the gift continue.

FADE OUT.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

A biting wind howls outside. The last of the children are bedding down near the hearth. Nathan blows out lanterns.

Julia checks her ledger, closing it softly.

A sudden pounding on the front door.

Everyone freezes.

Julia crosses to open it.

A YOUNG MOTHER (30s), wild-eyed and soaked from snow, stands clutching two small children - one in her arms, the other hiding behind her coat.

JULIA
Are you all right?

MOTHER
Please. We heard you take people
in. I don't have anywhere else.

The younger child coughs violently.

Julia hesitates. Looks around. The bedding is full. Supplies low.

Nathan steps up.

NATHAN
We're maxed out.

JULIA
We'll figure it out.

GRACE (FROM BEHIND)
There's no room.

JULIA (FIRMLY)
Then I'll make room.

Julia leads the mother and children inside, stripping wet coats, guiding them to the fire.

Nathan and Grace exchange a glance.

GRACE (QUIETLY)
That's not how Tim would've done it.

JULIA (WITHOUT TURNING)
It's exactly how he would've done it.

INT. FOUNDATION - SUPPLY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Julia digs through bins. One blanket. One small pillow. A broken cot.

She kneels, fixing the leg with a scrap of wood.

GRACE (ENTERING)
What if more come?

JULIA
Then we'll figure that out too.

Grace kneels beside her.

GRACE
You're supposed to protect the Foundation, Julia.

JULIA
I am.

GRACE
You're supposed to protect yourself too.

JULIA
Not tonight.

They finish stabilizing the cot.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - LATER

The mother sleeps, one child curled beside her, the other in Julia's lap.

Julia doesn't move. Just watches the fire.

Grace stands behind her, quiet.

After a long beat, she lays a hand gently on Julia's shoulder.

No words.

Just warmth.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Julia places the ledger on the desk. Opens it. Writes slowly.

JULIA (V.O.)

Anna - arrived in the storm with no shoes and two children.

Left with warmth, and maybe hope.

We gave what we didn't have.

Because someone once gave it to us.

She closes the book.

Snow taps softly at the windows.

INT. FOUNDATION - STORAGE ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Grace moves old donation boxes, restocking shelves.

She opens a cracked wooden crate labeled:

WINTER - OLD STOCK

Inside, under scarves and gloves, she finds a sealed envelope:

To Grace - For When She's Ready to Let Go.

She stares at it for a long moment.

Then pockets it.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Grace sits at the desk. Alone. The room is quiet.

She opens the letter.

TIM (V.O.)

You always said I held on too long.
Maybe that's true. But this time,
Grace... I hope you let go too.

Grace's eyes well. She wipes them quickly.

TIM (V.O.)

I didn't leave because I stopped
believing.
I left because I believed enough in
her. And in you. You never needed
me to lead. Only to let you.

She folds the letter, lays it beside the green notebook.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - SHORTLY AFTER

Julia helps a boy adjust his coat.

Grace watches from the archway.

Julia senses her. Looks up.

GRACE

He left you the ledger.

JULIA

He left us everything.

Grace steps closer.

Hands her the folded letter.

GRACE

But he left me this.

Julia reads. Silent. Takes it in.

JULIA

Are you okay?

Grace nods.

GRACE

I am now.

EXT. FOUNDATION - EVENING

The wind has died. Stars peek through clouds.

Julia hangs a new paper star in the front window.

The plaque catches the light:

Let the gift continue.

INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM - NIGHT

Julia lights a candle. Opens the ledger.

JULIA (V.O.)

Tim - said the gift was never about
who gave it...

Only who gave it next.

She looks toward the front of the Foundation.

Smiles faintly.

Then turns the page.

INT. FOUNDATION - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Julia teaches a young teen, SOPHIE (13), how to stir the porridge without burning it.

JULIA

Keep the spoon moving. Even when
it's quiet.

SOPHIE

That's... poetic.

Julia smirks.

JULIA

It's oatmeal.

INT. MARKET STREET - DAY

Nathan walks through the snow, delivering a parcel of folded blankets to an elderly vendor.

VENDOR

Cratchit Foundation?

NATHAN

Still warm. Just like Tim left them.

The vendor presses a silver coin into Nathan's hand.

VENDOR

Pass it forward.

INT. CITY SHELTER - NIGHT

Grace kneels beside a cotside teen, KIAN (16), trembling and ashamed.

She wraps him in one of the Foundation's green scarves.

GRACE

You don't have to tell me your story.
You're already part of ours.

INT. LEDGER ROOM - EVENING

Julia writes slowly by candlelight.

JULIA (V.O.)

Sophie - learned to stir with purpose.
Nathan - delivers more than supplies.
Grace - speaks without asking.
Each one carrying something more than they arrived with.

EXT. PARK BENCH - LATE AFTERNOON

A former guest, ELDERLY MAN, now dressed warm, hands a sandwich to a man on the street.

No words exchanged.

He smiles. Keeps walking.

INT. FOUNDATION - BEDTIME - MAIN ROOM

The children are curled into blankets. Julia dims the lanterns.

One child peeks out.

CHILD

Will the stars still be there
tomorrow?

JULIA

Yes.
And we'll still be here to see
them.

She tucks him in.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

The ledger sits open.

One name per page.

A new gift for each.

EXT. CITY STREET - DUSK

The snow is heavier now. Christmas Eve looms.

We see a long line outside a soup kitchen. A former
Foundation child, now a teen, distributes mittens from a
satchel marked "Property of Cratchit."

She doesn't smile.

She just gives.

INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM - NIGHT

Julia sits at the desk with a young boy (8) beside her - wide-
eyed, curious.

He points to the ledger.

BOY

Who wrote all this?

JULIA

Someone who learned how to see
others.
Because someone saw him first.

BOY

Was it you?

JULIA

No. But I carry what they gave me.

The fire crackles. Julia thinks. Then opens a small cloth bundle from the shelf.

Inside: an old letter, frayed and faded.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Want to hear how it started?

The boy nods.

FLASHBACK - INT. COUNTING HOUSE - NIGHT - YEARS AGO

A young, fragile Tiny Tim (12) sits bundled near a flickering stove.

Across the room, EBENEZER SCROOGE scribbles numbers in a ledger.

Tim watches. Shivering.

Scrooge sighs. Looks up.

SCROOGE
Do you know how to read?

YOUNG TIM
A little.

SCROOGE
Then come here.

Tim hesitates... then limps forward.

Scrooge sets the pen down.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
Start here.

He points to a blank page.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
It begins with one name.

Tim looks up, unsure.

SCROOGE (CONT'D)
Yours.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM

The boy leans against Julia's side.

BOY
So the whole thing's about names?

JULIA
No.
(beat)
It's about what those names needed.
And who cared enough to remember.

She closes the cloth bundle.

FLASHBACK - INT. COUNTING HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Young Tim holds the pen awkwardly.

Scrooge watches from his chair, not unkind, but reserved.

SCROOGE
Go on then.

Tim carefully writes his name: T. Cratchit

He looks up, uncertain.

YOUNG TIM
That's all?

Scrooge picks up a small sack of coins and places it beside the book.

SCROOGE
No. Now write the name of the first
person who needs more than you.

Tim stares at the blank space.

Then slowly writes: B. Cratchit

SCROOGE (SOFTLY) (CONT'D)
That's how it starts.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM - NIGHT

The boy traces a finger down one of the names in the book.

BOY
You think I'll ever be in it?

Julia closes the ledger gently.

JULIA

You already are. You just haven't
seen it yet.

She rises. Pulls a blanket off the back of the chair.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Bed.

BOY

Will you tell it again tomorrow?

Julia smiles.

JULIA

Every day if you ask.

INT. FOUNDATION - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Sophie stirs a pot of porridge. Steam curls from the pot.

She doesn't spill a drop.

Grace watches from the doorway, silently impressed.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Julia adds a fresh name to the ledger.

JULIA (V.O.)

Sophie - once unsure. Now steady.
The gift passes even when we don't
notice it's moving.

She flips to the next blank page.

EXT. FOUNDATION - DAY

We follow Julia as she exits with Nathan, a stack of boxes in
her arms.

The town is quieter now. Christmas Eve has passed. The snow
is heavier.

They reach a doorstep. A YOUNG WOMAN with a baby answers.

Nathan hands her a bundle of food and scarves.

YOUNG WOMAN

You folks don't stop, do you?

JULIA

Not until it's warm enough for everyone.

They leave. The door closes behind them.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

The tree has been taken down. The paper stars are boxed away. Julia helps the last of the children zip their coats.

Sophie stands near the fire with a clipboard, checking names.

SOPHIE

We're two blankets short. I'll run upstairs.

JULIA

Take Nathan with you. The loft stairs still creak.

Sophie nods, all business. Grace chuckles.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Julia finishes her ledger entry. Grace lingers in the doorway.

GRACE

You ever going to let me take that over again?

JULIA

If you ask me again, I just might.

Grace steps in. Sets a fresh cup of tea beside her.

GRACE

You've done good, Jules.

JULIA (SMILING)

We've all done good.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

A fresh paper star hangs in the window. The building is calm. Snow falls softly.

SUPERIMPOSE: ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. FOUNDATION - FRONT GATE - WINTER AFTERNOON

A YOUNG GIRL (10), bundled in an oversized coat, stands hesitating at the gate.

She clutches a frayed satchel.

From inside, voices. Laughter.

She steps forward—

—just as the door opens.

Julia appears, clipboard in hand, surprised to see her.

JULIA
Hello there.

The girl doesn't speak.

Julia kneels.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Are you cold?

She nods.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Hungry?

Another nod.

Julia offers her hand.

JULIA (CONT'D)
We've got both covered.

The girl hesitates. Then takes her hand.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The girl stares wide-eyed at the fireplace, the warmth, the children.

Sophie walks over with a pair of mittens.

SOPHIE
You can sit by me if you want.

The girl nods shyly.

Julia watches, arms folded, leaning against the doorframe.

Nathan passes behind her.

NATHAN
You see yourself?

JULIA
No.
(beat)
I see Tim.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Julia sits at the desk, ledger open. A knock on the door.

She looks up as FRED (70s), impeccably dressed and soft-spoken, steps inside.

FRED
Julia Cratchit?

JULIA
Yes.

FRED (SMILING)
I knew your predecessor. Quite a man.
And the man before him, too.
Ebenezer was my uncle.

Julia straightens, suddenly aware.

JULIA
I didn't know that.

FRED
Most don't. He became someone worth remembering later in life.
And that's why I'm here.

He sets a folder on the desk.

FRED (CONT'D)
The city would like to partner with the Foundation.
Rebrand it as a flagship community center. Bigger footprint. Official oversight. Same mission... but a little more polish.

Julia flips through the folder: mock-ups, logos, bureaucratic buzzwords.

She closes it slowly.

JULIA
Why change the name?

FRED
"Cratchit" means something to a few
of us. But branding matters now.
Donors like modern. Not mournful.

Beat.

JULIA
We're not in mourning.
We're in memory.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Julia walks out holding the folder.

Grace is arranging a bin of donated boots.

JULIA
They want to rename the Foundation.
Rebrand it.

GRACE
What would it be called?

JULIA
Unity Hall.

Grace blinks.

GRACE
Tim would've choked on that.

Julia almost laughs. Then quiets.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Your name's on the door now.
Not just his.

JULIA
That's what scares me.

Grace sets a hand on her shoulder.

GRACE
Bob Cratchit once stood up to a man
who held his whole life in a
ledger.
Not with anger. With decency.

JULIA
So I'm allowed to say no?

GRACE
You're required to.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

The city folder sits in the bin. Rejected.

Julia opens the ledger.

JULIA (V.O.)
Fred - offered money with meaning
removed.
We chose less - so we could keep
more.

She flips to a new page.

Pauses.

Writes:

Let the name remain.

INT. FOUNDATION - BACK ROOM - LATE NIGHT

The children are asleep. A fire crackles low.

Grace folds laundry alone.

She stops when she picks up an old, faded green scarf -
frayed at the edges.

Her fingers trace the stitching.

FLASHBACK - INT. CRATCHIT HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT (DECADES AGO)

A modest room. Candlelight flickers.

A young GRACE (12) sits on the floor near the hearth. Her
father, BOB CRATCHIT (40s), sits in a threadbare chair,
repairing a pair of shoes.

GRACE (YOUNG)
Why don't you ever get angry, Papa?

BOB
Oh, I do. Sometimes. Quietly.

GRACE (YOUNG)
Mr. Scrooge made you work Christmas
once. You didn't even yell.

Bob finishes tying the shoe. Smiles faintly.

BOB
Because yelling wouldn't change
him. But kindness might.

He looks across the room, where Tiny Tim (8) sleeps in a
small bed, breathing shallow but peaceful.

BOB (CONT'D)
A man isn't remembered for how loud
he was.
But for what he left behind.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. FOUNDATION - BACK ROOM

Grace places the green scarf on the shelf beside the ledger.

She sits, eyes misted.

Julia enters quietly.

JULIA
You okay?

GRACE
Just visiting the past.

JULIA
Should I come back?

GRACE (SHAKING HER HEAD)
No. Stay.
You're part of it now.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Grace opens the ledger for the first time in a long while.

She flips through the names.

Then slowly... adds one of her own.

GRACE (V.O.)
Bob Cratchit - taught kindness
louder than anger.
He gave without fear.
And left more than he ever took.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

The wind howls. Snow drives sideways against the building.
This storm is heavier, colder than before.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lanterns flicker. The roof creaks.

Children huddle close to the hearth. Julia moves quickly,
handing out extra blankets.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Back pantry's flooded. We've lost
half the dry goods.

Grace rushes in.

GRACE

The pipes froze. Water's out.
Cistern's dry.

Julia closes her eyes, breathes deep. Then stands tall.

JULIA

Okay. Let's work the list.
We ration what we have. Start
heating snow. Nathan-get lantern
oil and see if the bakery still has
flour. Grace-use the old ledgers
for kindling. No one needs 1891's
inventory.

Everyone looks at her.

She nods firmly.

JULIA (CONT'D)

We'll get through the night.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

The wind rattles the windows.

Julia sits, wrapped in a blanket, watching a pot boil over a
fire grate.

One of the children, the same girl from earlier, brings her a
mug of water.

CHILD

You look cold.

JULIA (SMILING)

So do you.

They sit together.

EXT. BAKERY - NIGHT

Nathan bangs on the back door.

A lantern flickers inside. The BAKER opens.

Nathan lifts a sack of mittens and scarves.

NATHAN

We trade warmth for bread?

The baker nods, disappears, and returns with three loaves.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - EARLY MORNING

The storm has passed.

The fire still burns.

Children sleep safely. Julia dozes in a chair, head tilted.

Sophie walks through quietly, tucking in blankets.

INT. LEDGER ROOM - LATE MORNING

Julia wakes. Enters the office. Opens the ledger.

She writes:

JULIA (V.O.)

We lost food, power, water.
But not each other.

(beat)

The gift held.

EXT. FOUNDATION - DAY

The snow has calmed. The wind is gone.

Footprints mark the fresh powder outside the door.

Inside, light flickers from the windows. Smoke curls gently from the chimney.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - AFTERNOON

Julia finishes helping the last family of the day - a man and his daughter, grateful, but proud.

They leave with dignity.

Sophie approaches with a small pouch of coins.

SOPHIE

One of the vendors dropped this off. Said his wife was one of ours once.

JULIA

What did you tell him?

SOPHIE

That once you're part of this place...
you always are.

Julia smiles. Her eyes well.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Julia stands before the ledger.

It's thicker now.

She flips back through pages - Tim's entries, Grace's handwriting, her own.

She lifts the pen.

Then pauses.

And writes:

Julia Cratchit - gave what she could.

Then gave again.

She closes the book.

INT. FOUNDATION - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie sits with the same quiet girl from a year ago.

She's helping her thread ribbon through a paper star.

Julia walks past them. Pauses.

JULIA
That one's a bit crooked.

SOPHIE
So was yours, remember?

Julia laughs. Keeps walking.

INT. LEDGER ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The room is dark. Candlelight flickers.

Julia enters, one last time. She places the green notebook beside the ledger.

She adds a folded piece of paper:

"If you're reading this, then the gift is already yours."

She walks out.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

The camera pulls wide.

Children's voices inside. Snow falling.

The window glows. A new paper star spins gently.

The building holds.

INT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

All is quiet now.

Julia walks the halls alone, extinguishing lanterns one by one.

Children sleep soundly. Snow taps at the windows.

INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She steps inside. The room is warm, still.

The ledger and green notebook rest together on the desk.

Julia lights a candle and opens the ledger one last time.

She writes:

This book began with one name. It ends with all of ours.

She signs only:

J.C.

And closes the cover.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Sunlight streams through frosted panes.

Sophie stands at the hearth, reading aloud from the green notebook to a half-circle of younger children.

Julia watches from the doorway, unseen.

EXT. FOUNDATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Julia walks outside into soft snow.

She looks up.

A single paper star flutters gently from the eaves.

She smiles.

INT. LEDGER ROOM - DUSK

The room is now empty.

Light filters through the frosted glass.

The candle still flickers beside the closed ledger.

SLOW PULL BACK:

In the far corner of the room, the air stirs gently.

And then - standing silently in shadowed light - appear:

BOB CRATCHIT, hand folded gently

JACOB MARLEY, looking quietly repentant

EBENEZER SCROOGE, older, soft-eyed

And finally, TIM CRATCHIT, scarf in hand

They do not speak.

They do not move.

They simply watch.

Proud.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

From outside, laughter echoes within.

The window glows gold.

A new star turns slowly in the wind.

FADE OUT.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Julia sits with SOPHIE at the desk. The ledger lies between them.

JULIA

Every name in here isn't just
someone we helped.
It's someone we saw.

Sophie runs her hand along the edge of the cover.

SOPHIE

How do you decide what to write?

JULIA

Don't write about what you gave.
Write about what they needed.

INT. FOUNDATION - STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Julia opens a box of supplies.

JULIA

First lesson: give the best first.

SOPHIE

But what if we run out?

JULIA

Then we make more. Or we share
better.

She hands Sophie a folded coat.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Always give as if it's the last one
you'll ever hand out.

INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Julia sits nearby as Sophie writes carefully in the ledger.

SOPHIE (V.O.)

Mrs. Ellis - needed food, but
stayed for the quiet.
Said our warmth helped more than
the soup. She left full.

Julia watches, smiling.

JULIA

You saw her.

Sophie nods.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

Julia pins a new paper star above the window.

Sophie enters from behind.

SOPHIE

Do you think I'll be good at this?

Julia turns.

JULIA

You already are.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

The stars above. A warm glow from within.

Sophie's reflection in the window now mirrors Julia's from
earlier.

A legacy, quietly continuing.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - AFTERNOON

The day is slow. Julia and Grace sit at a table sorting
through notes and winter donations.

The front bell chimes.

They both glance up as the door opens.

A tall, well-dressed man in his late 50s enters. He removes his gloves respectfully, scanning the room.

JULIA

Welcome in. Can we help you?

MAN

You already did. About forty years ago.

Julia and Grace exchange a look.

MAN (CONT'D)

My name is Langford.
Robert Langford.

GRACE

That name sounds familiar.

LANGFORD

It wouldn't. I was a nameless boy in an orphanage once. Until a man - Ebenezer Scrooge - paid my tuition. Paid for books I never saw. Paid for a life I had no idea I'd someday live.

They fall silent. Langford steps forward.

LANGFORD (CONT'D)

He never met me.
But I read every speech he gave.
Every line of that ledger. He made me believe I mattered before I knew how to believe it myself.

INT. FOUNDATION - OFFICE - LATER

Langford sits across from Julia. On the desk is a bank draft.

Julia reads it. Her eyes widen.

JULIA

This number has too many zeroes.

LANGFORD

So did the number of children Scrooge helped.
I only want to repay the debt.

Julia's voice softens.

JULIA
There is no debt.

LANGFORD
Then call it interest. On kindness.

He rises. Looks around the office.

LANGFORD (CONT'D)
This place feels right.
Not flashy. Not big. Just right.

JULIA
We try to stay small enough to see
people.

He smiles.

LANGFORD
Then let me help you see farther.

INT. FOUNDATION - LEDGER ROOM - EVENING

Julia opens the ledger.

She adds:

Robert Langford - believed without seeing. Returned with eyes
wide open.

Left more than he was ever given.

She closes the book.

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. FOUNDATION - EVENING - SPRING AIR

Lanterns line the walkway. Paper stars flutter gently
overhead. A table is set up outside, with cider and bread.

Guests gather - some familiar, others new. A warm sense of
purpose fills the air.

INT. FOUNDATION - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julia walks among the guests with ease. She's not directing -
she's part of the rhythm.

Children help serve cider.

Sophie, now confident and poised, handles introductions.
Grace and Nathan share a quiet bench near the hearth.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

A modest stone plaque has been added beside the original:
Timothy Cratchit Memorial Gathering - Year One
"Let the gift continue."

Langford approaches with a wrapped book.
He hands it to Julia.

LANGFORD
New ledger.

Julia smiles.

JULIA
I was hoping someone would say
that.

She holds it, unsure whether to open it... then places it on a
new table.

INT. FOUNDATION - LATER THAT NIGHT

The party has quieted.

Julia sits alone near the fire.

Sophie approaches, holding a small notepad.

SOPHIE
I wrote something.
For the new ledger.

Julia gestures. Go ahead.

SOPHIE (READING) (CONT'D)
"Today we didn't save the world.
But we saved a few hours of it."

She closes the book.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Too short?

JULIA
It's perfect.

INT. LEDGER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The new ledger rests on the desk. A blank page glows in candlelight.

Julia lifts the pen, pauses.

Then sets it down.

She turns and walks away.

INT. FOUNDATION - EMPTY ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Shadows stretch. The stars spin gently outside.

And there - in the corner - they appear:

BOB CRATCHIT, eyes kind and soft

MARLEY, still solemn, but gentler

SCROOGE, hand resting on the back of Tim's shoulder

TIM, older now, watching silently.

TIM (SOFTLY, ALMOST WHISPERED)
It's been a long time since I said
it...
but God bless us. Everyone.

They do not speak again.

They simply stand.

Watching the gift continue.

Watching her walk away.

EXT. FOUNDATION - NIGHT

Julia exits into the starlight.

She looks up.

A child stands beside her, holding a ribbon-tied star.

CHILD

Where do you want this one?

JULIA

Anywhere you can see it tomorrow.

She helps tie it.

WIDE SHOT – FROM ABOVE

The Foundation glows. Paper stars dance. Laughter echoes faintly.

The gift continues.

FADE OUT.

THE END.