

“MARLEY’S GHOST”
An adaptation of “A Christmas Carol”
By Eric Webster

The Characters in order of appearance:

<p><u>CHORUS - throughout show</u> *Fezziwig Party attendees - Pre-show AND in show *Townspople *Phantoms</p> <p><u>PRE-SHOW</u> Nigel Fezziwig Miss Clove Fezziwig his wife Fiddler</p> <p><u>STAVE ONE</u> Marley’s Ghost Marley’s Tormentors Scrooge Bob Cratchit Fred Solicitor one Solicitor two Carolers Young boy Caroler Tavern Owner</p> <p><u>STAVE TWO</u> Spirit One Child Scrooge Fanny Scrooge Schoolmaster Scrooges Schoolmate Young Man Scrooge Dick Wilkins Willaby Enoch Slightly older Scrooge Belle Cordelia - Belle’s Daughter Belle’s other children</p>	<p><u>STAVE THREE</u> Spirit Two Emily Cratchit Belinda Cratchit Peter Cratchit Bob Cratchit Jr. Emily Cratchit Jr. Martha Cratchit Tiny Tim Lily Fred’s Wife Topper Other Friends in Fred and Lily’s house Ignorance Want</p> <p><u>STAVE FOUR</u> Spirit three Townsperson 1 Townsperson 2 Townsperson 3 Townsperson 4 Undertaker Mrs. Dilber Laundress Old Joe Caroline William</p> <p><u>STAVE FIVE</u> Goose Boy Young Girl</p>
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PRE-SHOW

FEZZIWIG'S CELEBRATION

On stage there is a dance and celebration going on as patrons arrive and are seated. There is a fiddler playing music and the stage is full of characters who are dancing or talking at the party. This is an improvised dance/party happening on stage. There are tables with food and drink, and chairs to sit on if an actor chooses. The "Dance Floor" is center Stage.

The stage setting is a multitude of clocks. Hanging, swinging freely, all shapes and types and sizes. Some standing, some hanging. Clocks of all sizes and types are everywhere. However, these clocks are disguised as ornaments in the pre-show Fezziwig Celebration.

On the catwalk, upstage center, there is one very large, circular clock. This is the Town Square clock. The face of the clock is lit from behind. It remains lit throughout the show.

None of the clocks come past the red curtain mark.

As patrons come in, the characters in the celebration can leave the stage and mingle in the audience if they so choose or remain on stage. However, Nigel Fezziwig and Clove Fezziwig WILL be talking to the audience constantly, welcoming them to the celebration as they enter, letting them know where they are, and keeping the energy VERY VERY high and very joyful and celebratory.

At the conclusion of the pre-show, the actors will leave the stage when Fezziwig announces to the characters on stage that it's time for the party to end and time to go home. They are all disappointed but have long goodbyes to each other and hug and wave as they make their way off stage. As they leave, they are all taking the ornament covers off the clocks. The characters will also take off all tables, food and other party set and prop pieces, until eventually revealing a stage of just the clocks

ALSO, a set piece of a counter/bar that was present for the Fezziwig celebration, that is upstage center, will be removed. Once removed, a reveal that behind this set piece is a pile of chains, (Styrofoam, gray linked tubing)

The chains extend out from the pile in 6 directions, stage left and right, etc. The chains extending out will be hidden during Fezziwig's celebration somehow but revealed at the end of the celebration and the "Clean up" of the party.

Also, during the clean-up of the celebration, the actor playing Marley will discreetly, without the audience seeing, make their way into and under this pile of chains.

The Fiddler remains on stage and moves down to a permanent location DSR – and will remain there for the show's duration. The Fiddler is now referred to as the violinist.

As actors/characters are leaving and saying their goodbye's, and "Cleaning up" the party, Fezziwig and Clove come down stage center and addresses the audience with a pre-show speech.

FEZZIWIG:

Thank you all for coming to my celebration – I am Nigel Fezziwig and this is my wife Clove.

CLOVE BOWS

And as unfortunate it is that my celebration has come to an end for this evening, I do invite all of you to stay to hear a tale of wonder and horror, understanding and vexation, but mostly of hope and redemption.

There **is/ is not** an intermission in the story. The story will take about ____ to tell.

A reminder that even though we have had plenty of food and drink at our gathering this evening, at this point NO food or drink is allowed in the playhouse.

CLOVE:

And there is no smoking in here or anywhere in the vicinity of here.

FEZZIWIG:

Yes indeed. Also, please refrain from any photography or filming.

CLOVE:

Whatever that is.

FEZZIWIG:

It's an invention of the future. But partaking in this future technology is a distraction to the storytellers and those around you. It can ruin the enjoyment of others. So please. Just be in the moment and listen to the story. A video recording of the performance will be available.

CLOVE:

Whatever that is.

FEZZIWIG:

PLEASE create an environment that is enjoyable for everybody. Please remove any crying children to the lobby area, and refrain from conversation and use of any of your future electronic devices during the show. PLEASE turn off your future devices. Do not put on vibrate or merely silenced as electronic equipment can interfere with our audio system.

CLOVE:

The future sounds terrible.

FEZZIWIG:

Oh it is. It is my love. It is. Your cooperation is GREATLY appreciated. And now we present to you the story of... Marley's Ghost

Fezziwig and Clove leave the stage. The house lights fade out. The stage also fades out.

STAVE ONE

Show start

Stage and house are dark. There is a significant amount of dark and silence. Just enough to be uncomfortable.

The following SFX and Lighting happens in conjunction with the stage action.

Wind howling SFX begins and increases in volume slowly

We hear a clock bell striking and gradually getting louder and louder with the wind.

A very dim spotlight comes on, upstage center. VERY low light, so as to not quite be able to make out what we see. The spotlight gets brighter and brighter in conjunction with the volume of wind and the clock bells.

More clock bell striking is added until it's a cacophony of clock bell striking.

STAGE ACTION DURING THE SFX/LFX

The spotlight is on the pile of chains upstage center – the pile begins to move. SFX of chains begin and continue throughout.

As the chains move, we gradually see the form of a figure emerging from the chains. It is Marley's Ghost. The figure begins to walk forward. Slowly, agonizingly, and with great distress. As Marley moves forward toward the edge of stage, the wind grows louder, the clocks continue to crescendo louder, the spotlight get brighter and brighter revealing more and more. Once near the edge of the stage, Marley is fully lit and a full eerie stage wash comes up revealing the ends of their chains that extended offstage and the end of each chain is being held by Marley's tormentors, otherworld beings who keep Marley bound in limbo. They are on levels spread out across the upstage back. Upon their reveal, they laugh maniacally and tug at Marley's chains lurching them back and forth. At the apex of the clock bells and wind, Marley let's out an agonizing yell.

MARLEY:

NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!

While he screams the Violinist plays a horrifying screeching sound.

The wind and clock bells stop. The tormentors go quiet and loosen the slack on Marley's chains and slightly cower. The full wash light goes out leaving just Marley in spotlight. Marley is at the edge of the stage, looking out over audience. breathing heavy and begins to speak. The voice is augmented with reverb/echo and is a painful whisper.

MARLEY:

I am dead.

There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of my burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, the chief mourner...

He turns and points stage left, and a DSL pool of light comes on revealing Scrooge, sitting at a desk. There is a door behind him. Scrooge has a pile of coins, a ledger, a feather pen, and a bucket on his desk. Throughout the following Marley dialogue, Scrooge is picking up coins one by one, looking at them, smiling, writing something in the ledger, and then dropping the coin into the bucket with a loud clank. One by one, over, and over, repeating this action continuously.

MARLEY:

And Scrooge signed it:

I am Jacob Marley. And I am dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew I was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and I were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was my sole executor, my sole administrator, my sole assign, my sole residuary legatee, my sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event of my death.

This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. Scrooge never painted out my name.

Marley points and another pool of light reveals the sign "Scrooge and Marley Counting House".

There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice.

SCROOGE:

YELLS OUT
CRATCHIT!!

MARLEY:

But the question is, why? What tragedy, happenstance, moment, formed him into this shape of ugly humanity? That is the question, and the discovery of which, could be his redemption.

For now, as he is in this moment, He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?", Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways.

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather.

The full wash comes back revealing the tormentors who are still holding the ends of Marley's' chains. The Tormentors begin to laugh Maniacally and start pulling on the chains and dragging Marley upstage. We hear the chains moving loudly. He fights and groans in agony over the actions of the Tormentors. As Marley clears to upstage center, townsfolk begin to appear walking from SR and SL across the stage, some carrying wrapped packages, on their merry way, in stark contrast to Marley's torment, to wherever they are going.

MARLEY:

He could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already—it had not been light all day.

A SR pool of light comes up revealing Bob Cratchit at his desk, shivering, and writing something in a ledger with a feather pen. Next to him is a wood stove. He has a candle on his desk, and he tries to warm his hands to the flame.

On the set, in between Scrooges desk on SL and Cratchits desk on SR there are two free standing windows that have been set by incoming townspeople.. The townspeople bustling to and fro on the street outside of Scrooges Counting House is continuous throughout the scene.

SCROOGE:

CRATCHIT!

CRATCHIT:

Yes Mr. Scrooge sir?

SCROOGE:

KEEP IT DOWN IN THERE!

CRATCHIT:

Keep it down sir?

SCROOGE:

There is some kind of chattering coming from your vicinity.

CRATCHIT:

I believe that is my teeth sir.

SCROOGE:

WELL MAKE IT STOP!

CRATCHIT:

Yes sir. So awfully sorry sir.

SCROOGE:

Mumbling

Not a moment of peace. I need silence. I have to start over again.

He dumps out his coins from the bucket on his desk and begins counting again. The sight of the first coin he picks up puts a slight, ghastly smile on his face. As he is repeating the process of picking up, writing down, and dropping coins in the bucket, Fred enters SR through the door – we hear the sound of a bell of a door opening. He walks up behind Scrooge.

MARLEY:

This is his nephew, Fred. For Scrooge, he represents all that tortures him.

FRED:

A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE:

Scrooge does not jump or move. He remains steadfast in his work.

SCROOGE:

Bah! Humbug!

FRED:

Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure?

SCROOGE:

I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry?

You're poor enough.

FRED:

Come, then, what right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE:

He stops his counting. Looks up at Fred and eyes him with a horrifying contempt.
BAH! Humbug!

FRED:

Don't be cross, uncle!

SCROOGE:

What else can I be. When I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!

FRED:

Uncle!

SCROOGE:

Nephew, keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

FRED:

Keep it! But you don't keep it.

SCROOGE:

Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!

FRED:

There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say. Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of other people as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!

Cratchit applauds from his desk

SCROOGE:

CRATCHIT! Let me hear another sound from *you*, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation!

To Fred

You're quite a powerful speaker, sir, I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

FRED:

Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow.

Scrooge continues his work, he is slightly holding back emotion. He shakes his head 'no' very slightly.

FRED:

But why. Why?

SCROOGE:

Why did you get married?

FRED:

Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE:

Because you fell in love!

These words are obviously hurtful to Scrooge, but he shows it slightly. He gathers himself and looks up at Fred.

Good afternoon!

FRED:

Uncle, but you never came to see me before I was married. Why give it as a reason for not coming now.

SCROOGE:

Good afternoon.

FRED:

I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?

SCROOGE:

Good afternoon.

FRED:

I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. What is it about me that vexes you so?

SCROOGE:

I said good afternoon.

FRED:

A Merry Christmas, uncle.

He walks a few steps and turns

And A Happy New Year!

SCROOGE:

YELLING WITH RAGE

Good afternoon!

Fred walks over SR to Cratchit and shakes his hand

FRED:

Merry Christmas Bob.

CRATCHIT:

Merry Christmas Fred.

Fred returns to SL, slightly pausing by Scrooge's desk, as if he might say something. Scrooge never looks up and never stops counting his coins. Fred sighs, and walk past him ou through the door SL.

Cratchit gets up from his desk, shivering, and goes to a bucket, picks up a piece of coal, and heads toward the stove with the coal. Scrooge is alerted to the sound of the coal bucket, looks up.

SCROOGE:

You aren't putting in yet more coal in the fire are you Mr. Cratchit?

CRATCHIT:

Stops. Looks at the coal in his hand. Turns back to the coal bucket and drops it in.
No, I am merely, replenishing the bucket.

SCROOGE:

I'm glad to hear it.

Cratchit returns to his desk, warms his hands to the candle. The door opens and we hear the door bell of the door opening and two people enter. The two people come and stand near Scrooge's desk.

SOLICITORS FOR CHARITY

MAXIMILIAN THEOPHILUS

PENELOPE THEODOSIA

DALRYMPLE MOUNTGUARD

CLEMENTINA LIBERTY

FEARGUS NAPOLEON

Names to be chosen after casting – for now they are listed as “ONE” and “TWO”

ONE:

Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE:

Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago...

Looks at Pocketwatch

Well... this very night.

TWO:

We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

MARLEY:

From their permanent position upstage center

LAUGHS OMINOUSLY

The Tormentors pulls on his chains thrusting him back and laugh with him.

ONE:

At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time.

TWO:

Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE:

Are there no prisons?

ONE:

Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE:

And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

TWO:

They are. Still. I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE:

The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?

ONE:

Both very busy, sir.

SCROOGE:

Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I'm very glad to hear it.

TWO:

A few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE:

Nothing.

ONE:

You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE:

I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.

TWO:

Many can't go there; and many would rather die.

SCROOGE:

If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!

The two solicitors shrug and leave SL. There is the sound of the bell on the door as it opens and closes. As they leave the town square clock strikes 5 times. Townspeople on the street stop and react, looking at their pocket watches, and are excited for Christmas Eve. Scrooge at this bell tolling checks his pocket watch as does Cratchit. A group of carolers begin singing off stage and enter. They are greeted warmly by the people on the street who nod, tip hats and smile. Some stop to listen as they walk and sing. As they make their way around the street they eventually stop at the windows of the Counting House. These Carolers are the same that will be in the lobby pre-show singing as patrons enter.

CAROLERS:

God Bless ye merry Gentleman let nothing you dismay...(Etc...)

Cratchit stands and smiles and approaches the window to listen. Scrooge is obviously agitated as they continue to sing. He finally cannot stand it anymore and grabs an iron from the stove and makes his way toward the window wielding it.

SCROOGE:

AWAY! SILENCE! STOP THAT WRETCHED NOISEMAKING!

The Carolers flee in terror. One small boy remains and does not run. He stands with forlorn eyes, and his hand held out looking for any kind of gift of charity. Scrooge takes a step toward him...

SCROOGE:
BAH!

The small boy runs off. Scrooge turns toward Cratchit and gives him a look of disdain. Cratchit retreats to his desk. He snuffs out his candle and puts on his hat. Scrooge watches him the entire time.

SCROOGE:
You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT:
If quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE:
It's not convenient. And it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used. And yet, you don't think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

CRATCHIT:
But sir, it's only once a year...

SCROOGE:
A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

CRATCHIT:
I will sir. I promise sir. Oh thank you sir, thank you!

Cratchit runs off past Scrooge SL and through the door and shuts it. Scrooge turns toward his desk and puts on hat and jacket and grabs his cane, and heads off SL through the door. At the same time the set is being moved and re-assembled DSL by the townspeople, desks, windows, wood stove, etc...and adding table and chairs, a counter - Creating a tavern. the Tavern Owner enters and stands behind the counter.

Cratchit Re-emerges on the street scene DSL and he is now outside on the street with everyone else.

The violinist begins to play throughout the transition. It is upbeat at first and then becomes melancholy and slow by the time Scrooge re-enters and sits in the tavern later in the scene.

Cratchit sees a group of young people playing blindman's-buff. (in which one player, designated as "It", is blindfolded and gropes around attempting to touch the other players without being able to see them, while the other players scatter and try to avoid the person who is "it", hiding in plain sight and sometimes teasing them to influence them to change direction.) Cratchit joins in the game for a while. And then joyously runs off SR.

Fog begins to envelop the stage as the game is happening and should be quite prominent by the time Cratchit leaves. Scrooge enters again SL, through what is now the Tavern door and there is the sound of bell of a door opening. He sits at a table in the tavern. All of the townspeople are now gone, and the stage lights change to just the tavern and Marley, who is still observing upstage center.

TAVERN OWNER:

Evenin' sir. The usual?

Scrooge just grunts and waves him off with his hand, intimating to him "yes and go get it." Scrooge takes out his ledger and begins doing his books again. The barkeep returns with a bowl of soup.

TAVERN OWNER:

There you are sir. That will be 4 pence sir.

Scrooge reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small bag. He turns his back so the barkeep cannot see how much he has. He slowly counts out 4 coins and turns to hand it to him. As he is reaching out to put it in his hand, he stops and withdraws the money, picks up the spoon and tastes the soup. He thinks. Takes another taste, thinks, and then takes out a coin from his hand and hand the three remaining coins to the barkeep.

SCROOGE:

It tastes like three pence to me.

TAVERN OWNER:

Forgive me sir but...

SCROOGE:

Three pence or nothing and I shall never return. Something is better than nothing, wouldn't you say?

The Tavern Owner angrily takes the coins.

TAVERN OWNER:

Merry Christmas to you to sir.

SCROOGE:

Bah. Humbug.

The Violinst begins to play something melancholy.

Marley begins to move from his upstage center spot towards downstage center, with sounds of chains.

During Marley's narration, Scrooge stands and puts on coat, hat and grabs his cane. The Tavern set is taken off SL. Scrooge walks from SL to SR, where a door with a large knocker, to Scrooges home has been set, in addition to, on the other side of the door, a chair, fireplace, end table, carpet, a bed, candles, a window with a dim light pouring through, some books here and there.

MARLEY:

His melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having spent the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, he goes, per usual, home to bed.

He points to SR and Scrooges home is lit.

He lives in chambers which had once belonged to me. They are a gloomy suite of rooms, dreary. And nobody lives in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices.

Now, it is a fact, that there is nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, until tonight. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on me, since his last mention of his seven years' dead partner in the afternoon. But It is now that he will think about me, he will think about me from this point forward every moment until his grave. I will now make my presence known to him, and meld his memory of me to his very soul. It is time for his reckoning. It is time for him to face what he is, why he is, and what he is done.

If he can change now, he will not suffer the same fate as myself and I, possibly, will be released from this interminable limbo and these tormentors.

The tormentors scream and tug on his chains.

The Violinist plays foreboding alternating notes suspenseful throughout the following scene.

The door to Scrooges home is moved from SR to Center in front of Marley. Scrooge makes his way to his door. There is a square cut out of the door. Across this square is a piece of muslin painted the same color as the door. On the muslin is painted a door knocker.

Scrooge is fumbling with his keys trying to get them in the lock when Marley presses his face through the Muslin and groans. The Tormentors groan as well. Scrooge looks up, gasps, steps back and stares. Rubs his eyes and looks again, but Marley's face is gone. The door is moved from center stage back to SR in front of his house. Marley has retreated all the way back upstage center and the tormentors are on their levels. Scrooge reaches up and touches the knocker where Marley's face was. He pulls himself together.

SCROOGE:

Bah.

Scrooge opens the door and enters his house. As he opens the door, the door is taken off SR. We can now see the house interior set without the door in the way. Scrooge lights a candle and begins to walk, he hears Marley and the tormentors Groan and howl again. He stops, looks around, pulls himself together again.

But he continues to search his house with his candle looking for a sign of what made the noise. Looking behind and under things. He eventually takes off coat, hat and cane, steps off SR for a quick change into nightgown and cap. While he is gone Marley and the tormentors howl again. Scrooge rushes back on from SR with candle in one hand and a bowl and a spoon in the other. He sets down the bowl as he again frantically looks around for the source of the noise. Finding nothing. He internally resolves the issue logically somehow.

SCROOGE:

Humbug!

The clock bell from the tower in the main square strikes twice. He looks out the window at the clock tower.

SCROOGE:

2:00 in the morning. I am up far later than is my custom. But I must eat before I rest.

He sits down in the chair and begins eating from the bowl that he set down earlier.

On the fireplace mantel is a bell. Marley makes his way from UC as Scrooge is eating, Into Scrooges home set, and picks up this bell and gives it just a slight ding.

Scrooge turns and looks only to see the bell sitting on the mantle. Scrooge turns again to eating. Marley repeats this two more times. Each time Scrooge turns the bell is in it's place. The 4th time Marley rings the bell loud and long and piercing.

This is when the Violinist stops playing.

There is a long silence as Scrooge is now standing staring at the bell that has now been set down. We only see Scrooge breathing heavily. Staring. Marley is nearby but Scrooge cannot see him.

Marley then begins to move his chains slowly, gradually getting louder and faster with his movement.

Scrooge is trembling in terror as the chains get louder and louder. Yet he is defiant.

SCROOGE:

It's humbug still! I won't believe it.

The chains stop. There is silence. Then suddenly the spotlight snaps on Marley. He is now revealed to Scrooge, who gasps.

SCROOGE:

I know him; Marley's Ghost! How now! What do you want with me?

MARLEY:

Much!

SCROOGE:

Who are you?

MARLEY:

Ask me who I *was*.

SCROOGE:

Who *were* you then?

MARLEY:

In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE:

Can you—can you sit down?

MARLEY:

I can.

SCROOGE:

Do it, then.

Marley sits and as he moves the chains make a tremendous amount of clatter.

MARLEY:

You don't believe in me.

SCROOGE:

I don't.

MARLEY:

What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?

SCROOGE:

I don't know.

MARLEY:

Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE:

Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of *gravy* than of *grave* about you, whatever you are! Humbug, I tell you! Humbug!

Marley let's out another frightful cry, and shakes the chains with such noise, that Scrooge holds on tight to his chair. Scrooge falls to his knees and clasps his hands before his face.

Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

MARLEY:

Do you believe in me or not?

SCROOGE:

I do. I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?

MARLEY:

It is required of every person, that the spirit within them should walk abroad among his fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!

Marley and the Tormentors shriek again.

SCROOGE:

You are fettered. Tell me why?

MARLEY:

I wear the chains I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to *you*? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!

SCROOGE:

Jacob. Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!

MARLEY:

I have none to give. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!

Marley and the tormentors screech and moan again.

SCROOGE:

But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

MARLEY:

Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. At this time of the year, I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down. Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

SCROOGE:

I will. But don't be hard upon me!

MARLEY:

How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. And by doing so, and setting this right, I possibly also might escape this eternity.

SCROOGE:

You were always a good friend to me.

MARLEY:

FRIEND!!

He laughs maniacally.

You will be haunted, by Three Spirits.

SCROOGE:

Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

MARLEY:

It is.

SCROOGE:

I—I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY:

Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls one.

Marley and the Tormentors each point to one of the clocks. He and the Tormentors are aware of the clocks on stage. No one else is.

SCROOGE:

Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

MARLEY:

Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. For your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!

Marley moves toward the window, stops and beckons Scrooge to join him at the window. When Scrooge arrives, Marley motions for him to look out.

When he does, Center stage light comes up and there are many phantoms wandering aimlessly and moaning in pain and horror, also with some kind of chains around them. Marley's Tormentors leave their levels and are chasing these phantoms around the stage.

MARLEY:

See them, hear them. There are many who chose the same path as we, and now this is their eternity. But you have been given the gift of fair warning, and by my gift, both our circumstance have the hope of a differing path.

The Tormentors stop chasing the spirits, return to their level, and pull Marley's chains and yank him out of Scrooges home and back up stage center where spotlight hits him. He howls the whole way. The other phantoms join him upstage center and howl with him and then retreat from him off SL and SR. leaving Marley alone and spot slowly fades on him to dark as does center stage light, leaving only SR, Scrooges home, in low candle lit light.

Violinist plays as Scrooge leaves the window bewildered. He stops and begins to say...

SCROOGE:

Humb....

But he stops himself and heads to bed, crawls in under the blanket, and lights fade to black. Violinists stops with fade.

STAVE TWO.

In the dark we hear the clock bell tolling. With each toll the clock bell tower becomes gradually a little more lit. But it is never in bright light. Upon the 4th bell, the light comes up in Scrooge's home, dimly lit, we see mostly just his bed and window. Scrooge is in bed under the blanket. Scrooge sits up quickly in his bed on the 5th toll.

SCROOGE:

5 tolls?

The tolls continue and with each toll, Scrooge says the number out loud - "Six – Seven – Eight..."

He runs to the window and looks out. He turns back from the window.

SCROOGE:

The clock strikes 12 yet it is dark. Why, it isn't possible that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!

He looks around quickly.

SCROOGE:

Marley...?... Was it a dream or not? I will know soon enough. Marley said the first visitation will come when the bell tolls one the next night. If I indeed have slept through an entire day and into the evening.

He lays back down, upright, on his bed.

I will lie here, awake, until the hour has passed.

There is a silence for awhile as he sits upright in his bed.

Then the clock strikes one. At the same it strikes the spotlight comes on instantly on the first spirit, who is standing next to the bed, creating the illusion of instant appearance on the bell toll. Scrooge shrieks/gasps.

SCROOGE:

Are you the Spirit, who's coming was foretold to me?

SPIRIT ONE:

I am!

SCROOGE:

Who, and what are you?

SPIRIT ONE:

I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE:

Long Past?

SPIRIT ONE:

No. Your past. Your reclamation begins. Take heed!

Spirit One take Scrooges Arm.

Rise! and walk with me!

They make their way toward the window. The window is moved off stage by a tormentor. The Spirit step forward past where the window was. Scrooge pulls back.

SCROOGE:

I am a mortal. I will fall to my death!

SPIRIT ONE:

Take my hand, you will be upheld.

Scrooge thinks, and gradually puts out his hand takes the hand of Spirit One. Upon their touch, there is a cacophony of action. The tormentors squeal in glee and leave their levels and begin running around the stage pushing the clocks so that they sway. There is a very loud wind sound. The violinist plays shrieking shrill notes. Scrooges house is removed from the stage of SR. The Spirit and Scrooge make their way to Center. The wind and violinist stop.

SCROOGE:

Good Heaven! I was a boy here!

As they walk around the stage people of all types pass them by but cannot see them. Scrooge calls them out by name as he recognizes them.

SCROOGE:

Cordelia Theophila
Georgianna Francesca
Job Constantine
Maxwell Julius
Willaby Enoch
Ursula Flora
Olive Lucina
Foster Lazenby....*Etc...*

SPIRIT ONE:

These are but shadows of the things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.

Your lip is trembling, and what is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE:

Nothing. Lead me where you will.

SPIRIT ONE:

You recollect the way?

SCROOGE:

Remember it! I could walk it blindfold.

SPIRIT ONE:

Strange to have forgotten it for so many years. Let us go on. You lead me.

They walk on and SL becomes lit where we see a small child at a school desk. There is a door and windows.

SPIRIT ONE:

The school is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

Scrooge sees the child and begins to weep.

SCROOGE:

I wish...but it's too late now.

SPIRIT ONE:

What is the matter?

SCROOGE:

Nothing. Nothing....There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all.

The door to the school house opens, a little girl comes in. She throws her arms around the child. The Violinist begins to play something up beat and sweet.

FANNY:

Dear Dear brother! *(Or perhaps sister)*
I have come to bring you home! To bring you home, home, home!

CHILD SCROOGE:

Home Fanny?

FANNY:

Yes! Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.

CHILD SCROOGE:

Oh Fan! Fan Fan Fan!!

They spin each other around and embrace again. The Schoolmaster enters.

The Violinist stops.

They stop their joy. And there is a moment they are all looking at each other. The Schoolmaster is stern and staring at Scrooge angrily. After a few beats, he sighs, resigns himself, and yells out the door.

SCHOOLMASTER:

Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!

After a few beats, another child appears at the door with Scrooge's belongings in some sort of box. The child hands it to Scrooge, and the child and Schoolmaster bow slightly and leave through the door. Fanny and Scrooge embrace again, and then separate. The Spirit makes a motion with their hand, and they are frozen in a moment where they are apart and looking at each other with great fondness.

SPIRIT ONE:

Always a delicate creature, with such a large heart!

SCROOGE:

So she had.

Scrooge makes his way toward Fanny, and steps in front of his younger self, and so now older Scrooge and Fanny are locked in a gaze of fondness. Scrooge begins to weep, He reaches out and touches her face.

SCROOGE:

Fanny! Oh, dear dear Fanny. I miss you so.

SPIRIT ONE:

She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

SCROOGE:

Wipes the tears, gathers himself and says...

One child.

With a hint of resentment.

SPIRIT ONE:

True. Your nephew, Fred.

SCROOGE:

Yes.

SPIRIT ONE:

She died in childbirth.

SCROOGE:

Oh Fanny. Why, why why, WHY WHY WHY!!! You saved me. Then you left me. You gave me the only joy I have ever felt. And then, it was gone. I should honor, revel in the sight of your son's face. It should be a joyous reminder of you. But his presence just brings me pain. So much pain. I sometimes feel that I might hate him. Fanny I am so sorry....

As Scrooge cries, the schoolroom leaves stage as does young Scrooge and Fanny. Townsfolk begin to cross back and forth across the stage, wishing each other a Merry Christmas, and general happiness. While this is happening, the schoolhouse on SL is being replaced with the desks from the opening scene, but in different positions, along with windows, stove, and door. Fezziwig comes in and sits behind on of the desks. All of this appears in front of Scrooge. He does not move while this is "built" around him.

SPIRIT ONE:

Know this place?

SCROOGE:

Know it! I was apprenticed here! Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!

Fezziwig puts down his pen, looks at his pocket watch.

FEZZIWIG:

Yo ho, there! Scrooge! Wilkens!

A young man Scrooge comes into the scene, accompanied by his fellow-'prentice.

SCROOGE:

Dick Wilkins, to be sure! Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!

FEZZIWIG:

Yo ho, my boys! No more work to-night. Christmas Eve. Christmas! Hilli-ho! Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho!

Everything that is Fezziwig's office leaves stage via the townsfolk, who had been walking the streets are now congregating and taking off their coats and hats and we have re-created the pre-show of Fezziwigs. We are in full party mode.

The Violinist begins playing the hoedown music as in the pre-show.

As the party and dancing go, Scrooge becomes swept up in the festivities. He eventually is so swept away that he attempts a "dos si do" with the spirit. Scrooge catches himself and pulls himself together. Young man Scrooge is also dancing and having the time of his life. Dick, Young man Scrooge and Willaby have a conversation next to Scrooge and the Spirit.

DICK WILKENS:

Good ol' Fezzi! A man amongst men!

WILLABY ENOCH:

A prince amongst Princes!

YOUNG MAN SCROOGE:

A King amongst Kings!

WILLABY:

I tell you, if it weren't for Fezzi and his wife Clove, I wouldn't be standing here right now. Their generosity and thoughtfulness saved me, and my family.

DICK:

Ay. If it were not for Fezzi and Clove, what would any of us be but poor wretches toiling about for scraps and a hay penney. My goal is to be as great a man as he.

YOUNG MAN SCROOGE:

AY!

To everyone in attendance and very loudly

PRAY RAISE YOUR GLASS!

Fiddler stops playing

To the good fortune of the company and generosity of Fezzi and Clove!!

DICK:

THREE CHEERS FOR FEZZI AND CLOVE!

ALL

HUZZAH! HUZZAH! HUZZAH!

Fiddler starts again and all begin to dance.

SPIRIT ONE:

Pointing at Fezziwig

A small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE:

Small!?

SPIRIT ONE:

Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

SCROOGE:

It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

SPIRIT ONE:

What is the matter?

SCROOGE:

Nothing particular.

SPIRIT ONE:

Something, I think?

SCROOGE:

No. No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.

SPIRIT ONE:

My time grows short. Quick!

Upon the utterance of the word "Quick" the music stops, the stage goes instantly dark except for a spot on Scrooge and the Spirit. All actors and set leave the stage quietly.

In the dark, Stage left, a bench is set. The light slowly comes up revealing a slightly older version of Scrooge, sitting on the bench.

SCROOGE:

Me. Again. Older. Certainly wiser.

SPIRIT ONE:

Wiser? I think not. Watch. Listen.

Belle enters and sits with Older Scrooge. They begin a silent conversation.

SCROOGE:

Belle!

SPIRIT ONE:

Watch. Listen.

Belle's line is mid-conversation.

BELLE:

...even me. I matter little to you, very little. You have changed. I know the passing of your sister Fanny has hardened your hope, your trust of everything. And now, to fill that void, another idol has displaced Fanny, me, everything and everyone; One that cannot hurt you or leave you. It is constant and loyal. And if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

OLDER SCROOGE:

What Idol has displaced you?

BELLE:

A golden one.

OLDER SCROOGE:

This is the even-handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

BELLE:

You fear the world too much. All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?

OLDER SCROOGE:

What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.

BELLE:

Shakes her head

Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man.

OLDER SCROOGE:

I was a boy.

BELLE:

Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I *have* thought of it, and can release you.

OLDER SCROOGE:

Have I ever sought release?

BELLE:

In words. No. Never.

OLDER SCROOGE:

In what, then?

BELLE:

In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us. Tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!

OLDER SCROOGE:

You think not...?

BELLE:

I would gladly think otherwise if I could. Heaven knows! When *I* have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!

Belle rises and leaves, moving from SR to SL, passing behind Scrooge and Spirit. Older Scrooge sits on the bench and makes no effort whatsoever to stop her.

SCROOGE:

Spirit! Show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?

SPIRIT ONE:

One shadow more!

SCROOGE:

No more! No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!

The spirit raises their hand and make a sweeping motion to extinguish the light on SR and Older Scrooge on the bench. Older Scrooge and bench leave stage in the darkness, and in it's place Scrooges home is placed. Spirit then raises his hand to bring up the light SR. There we are in a home with window, door, chair, fireplace, rug, and a small Christmas tree on a table, and candles. Belle is sitting in the chair with her daughter, Cordelia. She is singing to her and they are laughing. There are other children on the floor, playing, reading. Their merriment is interrupted by a knock at the door.

BELLE:

Knowingly

Now, who might that be?

CORDELIA:

Father Christmas?

BELLE:

Perhaps!

The children squeal with delight.

BELLE:

Well only one way to find out Cordelia!

Cordelia rushes to the door and opens it. There stands a man holding many packages, one of which is hiding his face. He steps through the door and Cordelia removes the package from his face revealing their father, it is Willaby Enoch.

ALL CHILDREN:

DADDY!!

The children swarm him, and hug him and take his packages and in general so very happy. As he moves the children do not let go. He makes his way to Belle.

WILLABY:

My dearest, how lovely you are.

BELLE:

Thank you. But you would not have found me so an hour ago. The youngest there, attempted to put a frying pan in their mouth, and that one there, I feared had swallowed some marbles.

WILLABY:

Did they!?!...

BELLE:

They did not, as I was quick enough to extract them from their mouth before they could.
She pretends to be scolding and then they all laugh.

CORDELIA:

It's true. He had them in his mouth and I have never seen mother move so quick!

They all laugh again. Willaby pulls all the children from him and motions them to leave him and Belle.

WILLABY:

Belle, I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.

BELLE:

Who was it?

WILLABY:

Guess!

BELLE:

How can I? Tut, don't I know? Mr. Scrooge.

WILLABY:

Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.

BELLE:

He made his choices.

SCROOGE:

Very sad

Spirit! Remove me from this place.

SPIRIT ONE:

I told you these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me!

SCROOGE:

Remove me! I cannot bear it! Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!

Scrooge lunges toward the Spirit, but before he can reach him, ALL lights on stage go out. Spirit leaves the stage.

The Violinist plays a shrieking, horrible and constant sound during the transition. In the dark, Belle's home set is struck and all actors leave stage. Scrooge heads SR where his "Home" set has been previously moved on stage. He crawls into bed under the sheets. Lights come up on Marley and his tormentors. They begin laughing softly and it gets louder and louder as does the Violin until an apex where the lights on Marley and the tormentors goes out, instant silence, Violinist stops. Beat of silence.

STAVE THREE.

We hear one bell tone. Lights up on Scrooge's home SR. There in his home is seated Spirit two, bathed in green light. Wearing a crown, a large king like cloak, sitting in a throne, with food everywhere. The Spirit is eating. Scrooge sits up

SPIRIT TWO:

I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the like of me before?

SCROOGE:

Never!

SPIRIT TWO:

Of course you have not. For I am very young. In fact, I was born just today. Have your never walked forth with my elder brothers?

SCROOGE:

I don't think I have. I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

SPIRIT TWO:

More than eighteen hundred. 1841 to be exact. I am 1842.

SCROOGE:

I see. Each Christmas, another comes.

Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

SPIRIT TWO:

Touch my robe!

Spirit Two steps from his throne and extends his robe. Scrooge slowly reaches forth and grabs it. As he does, SR lights go out, (Scrooge's home set is struck and removed) and Scrooge and Spirit Two are in spot, they walk to center where the lights come up on Marley and the Tormentors. We hear wind and the Tormentors laughing and squealing. The tormentors run around the stage touching and pushing and moving the clocks again. As they move they jerk Marley around and he groans. As the wind dies the lights come up full stage and we are back on the main street with townspeople moving everywhere, to and fro, greeting each other, carrying package, wishing a Merry Christmas, perhaps there are people selling food from carts.

SCROOGE:

Everyone is Kind and generous and of a hearty Nature. Pity that you and your brothers' lives are so short Spirit. But one day.

SPIRIT:

Spirit chuckles.

Yes. But beware. There are some upon this earth of yours, who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.

SCROOGE:

Aye.

They move from Center Stage to SL where the Cratchit house has been set in the dark. SL Lighting comes up as they walk. The townspeople leave stage and the street scene gradually ends as they near the house of the Cratchit's. They peer in the window. Inside is Bob Cratchit, Mrs. Cratchit (Emily), Belinda Crachit, Peter Cratchit, and two other small Cratchit children. They are eating, singing, playing – general festivities.

EMILY:

Where is your father? And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha is late as well!

Martha comes in the door

BELINDA:

Here's Martha, mother!

THE TWO SMALL CRATCHITS:

Here's Martha, mother!

Hurrah!

There's *such* a goose, Martha! Come see!

MRS. CRATCHIT:

Hugging and generally very happy to see Martha
How late you are!

MARTHA:

We'd a deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning!

EMILY:

Well! Never mind so long as you are here. Sit down before the fire, my dear.

THE TWO SMALL CRATCHITS:

Looking out the window, but not seeing Scrooge and the Spirit!
There's father coming!

Hide, Martha, hide!

*Martha is somehow hidden before Bob enters with Tiny Tim.
Bob enters with his son Tiny Tim on his shoulder. The Children and Mrs. Cratchit greet him
with hugs and glee as he enters.*

BOB:

Why, where's our Martha?

EMILY:

Not coming,

BOB:

Not coming! Not coming upon Christmas Day!

Martha emerges from her hiding spot.

EMILY:

I cannot continue this game any longer!

She runs to Bob and hugs him, and then hugs Tiny Tim.

Tim and the rest of the Children and Martha move downstage away from Bob and Mrs. Cratchit.

EMILY:

And how did little Tim behave?

BOB:

As good as gold, and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.

Bob gathers the family around him

BOB:

A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

ALL:

God bless us.

TINY TIM:

God bless us every one!

SCROOGE:

Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

SPIRIT TWO:

I see a vacant seat, in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

SCROOGE:

No, no! Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.

SPIRIT TWO:

If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future. But what of it? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

Scrooge hangs his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit and is overcome with penitence and grief.

SPIRIT TWO:

Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, **you** are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child.

BOB:

To Mr. Scrooge! The Founder of the Feast!

EMILY:

The Founder of the Feast indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

BOB:

My dear the children! Christmas Day.

EMILY:

It could only be Christmas Day, on which one drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do.

BOB:

My dear...Christmas Day.

EMILY:

I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's, not for his. Long life to him! A Merry Christmas and a happy new year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!

Tiny Tim begins to sing a song.

Scrooge and the Spirit turn away and walk from the window while Tiny Tim sings. As they walk away, the light on the Cratchit house fades, as does Tiny Tim's singing, but the tune is picked up by the violinist. As they walk toward center, the full lights are coming up and the townspeople are back on stage, with movement of joy as before.

They move slowly toward SR where Nephew Fred's home has been set and the light slowly rises on their home. Again, Scrooge and the Spirit stand and look through the window. As the light rises on SR, Fred's home, the lights on the rest of the stage dim to dark, and the townspeople leave stage as they approach Fred's home. Inside are Fred, his wife Lily, and assorted friends, including Topper. They are all laughing as the lights come up.

FRED:

He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live! He believed it too!

LILY:

More shame for him, Fred!

FRED:

He's a comical old fellow, that's the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

LILY:

I'm sure he is very rich, Fred, at least you always tell *me* so.

FRED:

What of that, my dear! His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't do any good with it. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going to benefit US with it.

LILY:

I have no patience with him.

FRED:

Oh, I have! I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He doesn't lose much of a dinner.

LILY:

Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner,

FRED:

Well! I'm very glad to hear it. What do *you* say, Topper?

TOPPER:

A bachelor is a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject.

LILY:

Do go on, Fred. He never finishes what he begins to say! He is such a ridiculous fellow!

FRED:

Fred takes a deep; breath and braces himself for what he is about to say.

I was only going to say, that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, because he blames me for my mother's death.

TOPPER:

How so?

FRED:

I never knew her as she passed in childbirth. But for Uncle, my mother was everything, his only joy and hope. And it is well known that on the day of her passing, the day of my birth, that is the day he became what we know him to be today. He was once like us, and even close to marriage.

TOPPER:

Aye. Even Scrooge had a chance. I must indeed be a most foul wretch.

Everyone laughs.

FRED:

However, despite his misplaced blame for his misfortune, and his descent into his own thoughts of his persecution by the fates, and he stays on this day either in his moldy old office, or his dusty chambers, I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. I can't imagine the pain of losing someone that I love as much as he loved Fanny.

TOPPER:

Well then, to Scrooge.

FRED:

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is! He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!

ALL:

To Scrooge.

They raise their glasses and toast.

SPIRIT TWO:

We must leave.

SCROOGE:

Please, allow me to stay. I wish to stay. Let me be part of this in some way.

SPIRIT TWO:

We cannot.

SCROOGE:

One half hour, Spirit, only one!

SPIRIT TWO:

Struggling to speak

We cannot.

Scrooge turns back to watch through the window, and the Spirit walk to center stage. Center Stage remains dark, and in the dark, the two children, Ignorance and Want, position themselves in the dark underneath the Spirits robe. Scrooge notices the Spirit not with him anymore and walks center to the spirit. The light comes up on Scrooge and the Spirit center stage, the lights on Fred and Lily's fade out. Scrooge notices that the Spirit is walking noticeably labored.

SCROOGE:

You...you are growing older spirit? Are spirits' lives so short?

SPIRIT TWO:

As I told you, my life upon this globe, is very brief, It ends to-night.

SCROOGE:

Tonight!?

SPIRIT TWO:

Tonight at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.

The clock bells chime.

SCROOGE:

Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask, but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?

SPIRIT TWO:

It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it, Look here.

He opens the bottom of his long robe and reveals two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable.

SPIRIT TWO:

Look, down here!

SCROOGE:

Spirit! are they yours?

SPIRIT TWO:

They are humanities. And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.

SCROOGE:

Have they no refuge or resource?

SPIRIT TWO:

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

Scrooge turns his back and walks away a few feet, horrified at his own words thrown back at him. The light follows him, the light on the Spirit goes out. The spirit leaves the stage. The clock chimes stop.

STAVE FOUR

The wind begins to howl. The violinists begins to plays shrieking horrid notes. The light comes up on Marley and the Tormentors. The tormentors leave their levels and run around stage making all the clocks move again. Marley wails, the tormentors laugh. Scrooge is terrified. From out of the darkness, Spirit Three, slowly, gravely, silently, approaches. When it came near him, Scrooge drops to his knees.

SCROOGE:

I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?

The Spirit points with its hand.

You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us, Is that so, Spirit?

No Answer or movement.

Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any specter I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?

No Answer or movement.

Lead on! Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit!

The lights on the whole stage come up and reveal townspeople already in place on stage. They stop at a grouping of people who are in mid conversation.

TOWNSPERSON 1:

No ,I don't know much about it, either way. I only know he's dead.

TOWNSPERSON 2:

When did he die?

TOWNSPERSON 1:

Last night, I believe.

TOWNSPERSON 3:

Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

TOWNSPERSON 1:

God knows.

TOWNSPERSON 4:

What has he done with his money?

TOWNSPERSON 1:

I haven't heard, Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to *me*. That's all I know.

They all laugh

TOWNSPERSON 1:

It's likely to be a very cheap funeral, for upon my life I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?

TOWNSPERSON 2:

I don't mind going if a lunch is provided, But I must be fed, if I make one.

They all laugh

TOWNSPERSON 3:

Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all, for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met.

SCROOGE:

Who...who is this person they speak so ill of Spirit?

Spirit three points in another direction. The lights fade to spots on Scrooge and Spirit three. All townspeople leave the stage. Scrooge and Spirit three walk for a while until they come upon four people huddled together, as if in a dark alley, or hidden away.

UNDERTAKER:

I suppose we should give thanks, before we partake in these sins.

MRS. DILBER:

Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did.

LAUNDRESS:

That's true, indeed! No man more so.

OLD JOE:

Why then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who's the wiser?

LAUNDRESS:

No, indeed! Very well, then! Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose.

MRS. DILBER:

Laughing

No, indeed.

LAUNDRESS:

If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw, why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself.

MRS. DILBER:

It's the truest word that ever was spoke It's a judgment on him.

LAUNDRESS:

I wish it was a little heavier judgment, and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open the bundles, old Joe, and let us know the value of it. Speak out plain. We know pretty well that we were helping ourselves to before we left his house and met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundles, Joe.

Old Joe, opens the bundles and reveals small, inconsequential trinkets and clothing. He begins handing out money to each of them. First to the undertaker.

OLD JOE:

That's your account, and I wouldn't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it.

He turns to Mrs. Dilber and gives her money.

OLD JOE:

I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself,

He turns to the Laundress and holds up bedding.

OLD JOE:

His blankets?

LAUNDRESS:

Whose else's do you think? He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say.

OLD JOE:

I hope he didn't die of anything catching? Eh?

LAUNDRESS:

Don't you be afraid of that, I an't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. And this shirt. You won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

OLD JOE:

What do you call wasting of it?

LAUNDRESS:

Pointing to the undertaker.

Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure.

Gesturing toward the undertaker

Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead!

They all laugh.

SCROOGE:

Spirit! I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man who they all speak ill of, who has died, might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Yes?

No movement. No answer.

If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death, show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!

The Spirit makes a motion with his robe, the wind howls, the tormentors howl, and the lights come up instantly Center stage revealing a man and a woman, husband and wife, Caroline and William . Scrooge and Spirit Three are in spotlight.

CAROLINE:

Is it good news or bad William?

WILLIAM:

Bad.

CAROLINE:

He will not forgive our debts. We are ruined?

WILLIAM:

No. Caroline.

CAROLINE:

If *he* does not relent, then we are!

WILLIAM:

He is past relenting, He is dead.

CAROLINE:

Then...the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then. To whom will our debt be transferred?

WILLIAM:

I don't know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline!

They hug and cry with joy.

SCROOGE:

Spirit I beseech you! Let me see some tenderness connected with the death of this man!

The Spirit makes a motion with his robe, the wind howls, the tormentors howl, and the lights Center go instantly dark and light come up instantly SL revealing Cratchits home. The whole family is sitting silently. Reading, or knitting perhaps.

EMILY:

Your father should be home soon.

PETER:

He has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.

EMILY:

I have known him to walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

PETER:

And so have I, Often.

BELINDA:

And so have I

EMILY:

But he was very light to carry, and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble.

The door opens.

There is your father at the door!

They all get up and greet him with hugs.

BELINDA:

Don't be grieved Father.

EMILY:

You went to-day, then, Robert?

BOB:

Yes, my dear, I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child! My little child!

SCROOGE:

The young boy. Tiny Tim. This is hisfuture?

No reaction.

This cannot....be changed?

No reaction.

Spectre something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!

Spirit three points off SL and the lights go out on the Cratchit's house. The wind starts howling, the Violinist plays shrill notes the lights come up on Marley and the tormentors, who leave their levels and begin swaying the clocks. They howl and laugh and Marley moans. As they walk SR they are followed by the spot. They turn and come back to center where a fence and tombstones have now been set. Lights come up Center.

Spirit Three stops and points down to a tombstone.

SCROOGE:

Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that will be, or are they shadows of things that may be, only?

No movement no response.

Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead, But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!

No movement no response.

The Violinist crescendos a single, sorrowful note. Scrooge moves toward the tombstone. It is covered in dried weeds. He removes them, and it reveals the name Scrooge on the tombstone. The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again. The Violinist hits a screeching sound.

SCROOGE:

No, Spirit! Oh no, no! Spirit! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope! Good Spirit, your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life! I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

STAVE FIVE.

THE END OF IT

The lights go out. There is a scream from the tormentors and Marley, the violin screeches. In the dark SR Scrooges house has been set. Scrooge makes his way to his bed. Lights come up. Scrooge sits up, terrified, breathing heavy. He runs around his house touching things, himself, making sure it is real.

SCROOGE:

I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees!

MARLEY:

Go forth. Prove yourself.

SCROOGE:

The shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will! I don't know what to do. I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo! It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. I don't know what day of the month it is! I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!

The town square clock begin to chime. The lights come up on the upstage center. The townspeople are back, going about their business. Scrooge runs to the window. He calls out to a boy.

SCROOGE:

What's to-day?

BOY:

What?

SCROOGE:

What's to-day, my fine fellow?

BOY:

To-day! Why, Christmas Day.

SCROOGE:

It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hello, my fine fellow!

BOY:

Hello?

SCROOGE:

Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?

BOY:

I should hope I did.

SCROOGE:

An intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?—Not the little prize Turkey: the big one?

BOY:

What, the one as big as me?

SCROOGE:

What a delightful boy! It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!

BOY:

It's hanging there now.

SCROOGE:

Is it? Go and buy it.

BOY:

Yeah right.

SCROOGE:

No, no, I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it to Bob Cratchit's, and I'll give you a shilling. Do this in less than five minutes and I'll give you half-a-crown!

The boy runs off.

SCROOGE:

Bob Cratchit sha'n't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim.!

Scrooge puts on coat and hat and cane. The door to his house moves on stage and he steps through it. He stops. Looks back at the door knocker.

SCROOGE:

Jacob. Oh Jacob, I am so sorry for your eternity. But I thank you for your warning. Your selfless act to spare me, I would think should count for something.

He turns and joins the townspeople on the street. He randomly addresses them with

Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!

Etc...as he works his way from SR to SL. He comes across Solicitor one and two from the first Stave.

SCROOGE:

My dear sir, How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!

ONE:

Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE:

Yes that is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness...

He whispers in his ear.

ONE:

Lord bless me! My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?

SCROOGE:

If you please, not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?

TWO:

My dear sir, I don't know what to say to such munifi—"

SCROOGE:

Don't say anything, please come and see me. Will you come and see me?

TWO:

I will!

SCROOGE:

Thank you, I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!

He makes his way back across SR where Fred's house has been set up. Lights come up on Fred's home where he and his family/friends as from before are in attendance. Scrooge knocks on the door. A young girl answers.

SCROOGE:

Is Fred at home, my dear?

YOUNG GIRL:

Yes, sir.

SCROOGE:

Where is he, my love?

YOUNG GIRL:

He's in the dining-room, sir.

She motions for him to enter. Inside are all the same people as before when Scrooge visited with Spirit two – Lily, Topper, Fred and the other friends.

SCROOGE:

Fred!

FRED:

Why bless my soul! Who's that?

SCROOGE:

It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?

There is a moment of befuddled silence by everyone.

FRED:

OF COURSE! Come in Dear uncle!

He is greeted warmly with handshakes and salutations. Scrooge grabs Fred by the arm and walks him downstage away from the rest.

SCROOGE:

Dearest Nephew. I must apologize to you. But I do not know how to make the apology grand enough to warrant your acceptance.

FRED:

Apologize for what uncle?

SCROOGE:

I blamed you. I was ...Angry. At you. The world. Everyone.

He looks up

Everything.

He looks back at Fred.

I hated you.

FRED:

I know I...

SCROOGE:

And I'm sorry. I am so very sorry. But I now see what preservations my mind took to protect myself. And in that process, have hurt so many people.

FRED:

I do understand your pain Uncle. It's why I never gave up on you. To lose your most cherished things in life...It can destroy a man.

SCROOGE:

And in turn, destroy others. I was drowning, and you were my tether, you pulled me back. Everyone needs to be somebody's tether.

FRED:

In such a world, no one would drown.

SCROOGE:

Aye.

Lights go our SR. Violinist begins to play something upbeat. Lights come up SL where Scrooges office is set. Scrooge walks from SR to SL and into his office and to his desk. The clock tower strikes 9 tolls. He checks his watch. After a beat or two, Bob Cratchit comes running in, takes off his coat and hat and immediately sits and begins work.

SCROOGE:

Feigning anger

Hello! What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

BOB:

I am very sorry, sir, I *am* behind my time.

SCROOGE:

You are? Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.

BOB:

Making his way to Scrooge's desk

It's only once a year, sir, It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.

SCROOGE:

Now, I'll tell you what, my friend, I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore I am about to raise your salary!

Bob is stunned

A merry Christmas, Bob! A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you, for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon. Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!

Scrooge is happy, and then suddenly distracted. He begins wandering around, looking at, touching all the clocks on the stage.

BOB:

Mr. Scrooge? Are you alright sir?

SCROOGE:

Yes...Yes dear boy. I just have suddenly become very aware of time...

Lights dim on Scrooge's office. Lights come up on Marley. He works his way down stage. The tormentors surround him...and remove his chains. They leave the stage leaving Marley alone in spotlight. He is free. He begins to weep and falls to his knees. He looks out into the audience.

MARLEY:

God bless all of us, every one.

Lights fade to black. Beat. Hoe Down music begins from fiddler. Lights back up for bows.