

A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens

Adapted For The Stage By Stephen J. Cramer

Stave 1 MARLEY'S GHOST

(Charles Dickens is sitting in a chair SR, holding a large manuscript and writing with a quill pen...)

Dickens: *(while writing)* I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.

Their faithful Friend and Servant, Charles Dickens, December, 1843.

(pause, blots the paper) There...finished.

(pauses again...looks out at audience and smiles...then begins reading) Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good for anything he chose to put his hand to.

Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a doornail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for.

(lights come up on upstage revealing a woman in 1950's attire, maybe polka dots or pink...sitting with her children reading to them in their bed...children are wearing fun 1950's pajamas, perhaps Daniel Boone, maybe also a coon-skin cap on one.)

You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that

Together: *(the mother's voice joins with Dicken's)* Marley was as dead as a doornail.

Mother: *(only her voice continues, and lights fade low on Dickens)* Did Scrooge know he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign...his sole friend! And sole mourner.

Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up at all by the sad event. Fact it was that he was an excellent man of business, even on the very day of the funeral, and solemnized it with an undoubted bargain.

The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate.

(Cratchit comes in to the Counting House through the door, takes off his hat and coat and scarf, and goes to his desk) If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot -- say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance -- literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

(lights brighter in the Counting House...Cratchit is working at his desk) Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley,

(lights up on front edge of stage, man reading to his children in modern dress, probably jeans, with a modern book complete with glossy dust jacket. The children are wearing fun pajamas, perhaps Disney style, and maybe a Brat Doll in one of the child's hands...maybe a walkman headset around another's neck.)

Together: but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Father: *(only his voice continues and lights fade low on the 1950's family...they freeze)* Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge. A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.

(Scrooge begins coming up the aisle from the back of house, approaching the stage)

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.

(Scrooge pauses in mid-audience pool of light, observing the telling of the story...he isn't too pleased)

(The father points to Scrooge) Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with glad looks, 'My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?' No beggars implored him, no children asked him what it was o'clock. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways.

(The father glares right at Scrooge) But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call 'nuts' to Scrooge. *(Scrooge raises his cane in anger lunging toward them. The modern children run off, the 1950's family exits through the open bedroom door, while staring at Scrooge with disapproval, and Scrooge nudges the modern father out of the way as he moves up to the stage. The father shakes his head and exits as lights fade on him.)*

(lights up on Dickens again, he laughs...pauses...)

Scrooge: *(glaring at Dickens...waving his hand on at him)*

Go on, go on...tell your story!

(continues walking to the Counting House area, lights brighter)

Dickens: *(composes himself...continues)* 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, and 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 -- and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighboring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air.

The door of Scrooge's counting house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of...tank...was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore he tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

(Fred enters briskly through the Counting House door. His face is ruddy and handsome, eyes sparkling...his breath, warm from his rapid walking in the fog, can almost be seen in the cold counting house.)

Fred: A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

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? You're poor enough.

Fred: What right have you to be dismal? You're rich enough.

Scrooge: 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? 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.

Fred: Uncle!

Scrooge: Nephew! You 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, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that- 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 people below them 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!

(Bob Cratchit involuntarily applauds.)

Scrooge: Let me hear another sound from you, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! *(turns to nephew)* 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 tomorrow.

Scrooge: Yes, I'll dine with you all right...never!

Fred: But why? Why?

Scrooge: Why did you get married?

Fred: *(lightheartedly)* Because I fell in love.

Scrooge: *(mocking him)* Because you fell in love. *(Scowls)* Good afternoon!

Fred: Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. You have never even met Elizabeth, nor the rest of my family. 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. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!

Scrooge: Good afternoon...

Fred: And a Happy New Year!

Scrooge: Good afternoon!

(Fred crosses to Cratchit where they chat together a moment...smiling...a final Merry Christmas is heard between them, which, of course is a further irritation to Scrooge.)

(Overhearing Fred and Cratchit) There's another fellow—my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam. (Moves to Fred and Cratchit, angrily)

Good Afternoon!

(Fred exits through the Counting House door, and two gentlemen enter as he leaves)

Gentleman 1: Scrooge and Marley's, I believe (*looking at his list*)...Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge, or (*looking at Cratchit*) Mr Marley?

Scrooge: Mr Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago, this very night.

Gentleman 2: (*Handing Scrooge his credentials*) We have no doubt his generosity is well represented by his surviving partner.

(Scrooge frowns and pushes aside the book of credentials at the word 'generosity', and goes turns his attention back to his work as rudely as possible. Gentleman 2 is not discouraged and crosses around to the other side of Scrooge's desk.)

Gentleman 1: (*Opening the book and offering a pen to Scrooge*) 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. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

Scrooge: Are there no prisons?

Gentleman 1: Plenty of prisons.

Scrooge: And the Union workhouses—are they still in operation?

Gentleman 2: They are. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

Scrooge: The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigor, then?

Gentleman 2: (*sadly*) 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.

Gentleman 1: Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, 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!

Gentleman 2: (*with such delight that he puts his hand down on Scrooge's desk*) Oh, you wish to be anonymous!

Scrooge: *(slamming his ledger book closed on Gent 2's hand)* 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.

Gentleman 1: 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. Besides-excuse me-I don't know that.

Gentleman 2: But you *might* know it.

Scrooge: It's not my business! 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!

(Gentlemen move away from Scrooge indignantly shaking their heads and they cross to Bob Cratchit, who gives them a shilling before they leave...and they wish each other a Merry Christmas and shake hands. Scrooge is seething, and glares over to Cratchit, who quickly ushers the men out...they exit upstage very quickly.)

Cratchit!

Cratchit: *(begins crossing toward Scrooge)* Yes, Mr. Scrooge?

Young Boy: *(quickly enters through the open door that the Gentlemen are leaving through, and joyfully sings)* God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing...

Scrooge: *(scowls at the boy and interrupts him)* Go away! *(faster and louder)* GO AWAY!!! *(boy runs away and exits and Scrooge closes the door)*

(turns back to his desk and closes his ledger book) CRATCHIT !

Cratchit: *(Scurries over to him)* Yes, Mr. Scrooge...

Scrooge: *(slightly calmer)* You'll want all day tomorrow, 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, I'll be bound? And yet you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

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

Scrooge: *(Buttoning up his coat)* A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! *(pauses)* I suppose you must have the whole day. Well...you had better be here all the earlier next morning.

Cratchit: Yes, Mr. Scrooge...thank you...and...Merry Christmas Mr. Scrooge! Merry...
(Scrooge is walking away and turns back towards Cratchit with a glaring angry stare, then continues to exit down the steps into the aisle. Cratchit puts the desks away and then takes his coat and hat and exits around the corner discretely.)

(Meanwhile, Scrooge notices a destitute husband and wife who owes him money walking towards him with their young daughter/son.) [The daughter could be portrayed by the actor who plays Tiny Tim, assuming a girl is chosen. She would have her hair down for the little girl parts. Alternately, the actress playing little Fan could play the part.]

Scrooge: Well.....What have we here? Street beggars? No...more likely thieves, since you have not paid me. Where is my due?

Husband: Please, Mister Scrooge...it's Christmas Eve! We have no money to pay you. And if you take our house we shall have no place to live. We implore you sir, just a little more time.

Scrooge: Your time is already past. And as far as a place for you to live, well, the Union can be your new home for all I care.

Wife: Oh, kind sir. Have pity on us, or if not for us, then this poor child.

Scrooge: I am not your kind sir, nor any man's....nor any child's! See that you have the money first thing in the morning or I will see all of you in the workhouses by noon. Now go and leave me alone to my dinner. Go!

(the husband, wife, and child exit, sobbing as they go)

(As Scrooge continues walking away, the lights come up on Dickens, sitting in his chair down SR. Marley positions himself in the door unit, replacing the knocker with his face.)

Dickens: Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, walked to his nearby lodging. He lived in chambers, which had once belonged to his deceased partner.

They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again.

It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands.

(wind sounds begin)

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-year's dead partner that afternoon.

And so, let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change-not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley: *(lights up on the door knocker...we see Marley's face) Ebenezer ! (the sound of wind grows louder and Marley's voice is heard around the audience)*

(Scrooge backs away from the door and down the steps, turns away and the lights fade on the doorknocker.)

Dickens: *(In the dark, Marley replaces his face in the door with the knocker's)* To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. *(Scrooge turns back to the door and the lights brighten again)* But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on.

Scrooge: Pooh! *(closes door, slamming it...the sound echoes through the audience)*

Dickens: The sound of the door closing resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. But Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs...slowly too...trimming his candle as he went.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for the surrounding gloom. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right.

He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready, and a little saucepan of gruel upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumber-room as usual. Old fireguard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressing gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

(Scrooge changes into his dressing gown and nightcap during the Dickens dialogue.)

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel.

Scrooge: Humbug!

Dickens: After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing.

(Lights fade on Dickens, and in the faded light, Dickens turns and observes the action in the bedroom. Meanwhile, and a small calling bell moves and rings...then the clock chimes...and more bells and clocks, growing louder all around the audience, and then abruptly stops)

Scrooge: It's humbug still...I won't believe it.

(sounds of heaving chains in the hall, then the door to his bedroom swings open, and a cold blue light floods through the doorway with a shadow of a man growing from it...Marley enters through the SL door into the room, while Dickens discreetly exits SR)

Marley: *(as he enters...the sound of his voice is breathy, and is heard throughout the audience Wind sounds begin, with storms rumbles...these sounds continue throughout the scene, punctuated by loud crashes of thunder)*

Ebenezer...Ebenezer...Ebenezer Scrooooooge....

Scrooge: I...I believe I know you...What do you want with me?

Marley: Much.

Scrooge: Who are you?

Marley: *(walking up the steps)* Ask me who I was.

Scrooge: Who were you then?

Marley: *(turning to face audience)* In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

Scrooge: Hah ! *(Sarcastically...Scrooge looks skeptical)*

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.

(pulling toothpick from his pocket) You see this toothpick?

Marley: *(staring straight ahead)* I do.

Scrooge: You are not looking at it!

Marley: But I see it, notwithstanding.

Scrooge: Well, I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you. Humbug!

(crashes of thunder as Marley raises his voice in a frightful cry and shakes his chains with a dismal and appalling noise. Scrooge acts as though thrown down onto the floor, and acts as if he suddenly feels chains and weights around his own neck, dragging him down, and falls upon his knees, and clasps his hands before his face.)

Scrooge: Why do you trouble me?

Marley: Man of the worldly mind...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 man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, 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 moans and shakes his chains)

Scrooge: You are fettered. Tell me why?

Marley: I wear the chain 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 labored on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!

(Scrooge looks around himself and the floor, but doesn't see anything)

Scrooge: Jacob. Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob.

Marley: I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is all permitted to me. 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.

Scrooge: Seven years dead, and traveling all the time?

Marley: The whole time. No rest, no peace—incessant torture of remorse.

Scrooge: You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years.

(Marley cries out again, raising his arms and clanking the chains.)

Marley: Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed, **not to know**...that ages of incessant labor by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed! **Not to know**...that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness! **Not to know**...that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! Such was I!

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

Marley: Business? (*crash of thunder*) Mankind was my business. (*crash of thunder*) The common welfare was my business; (*crash of thunder*) charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. (*crash of thunder*) The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business! (*loud crash of thunder*)

At this time of the year I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me?'

(*Clock gong is heard in the distance*)

Marley: 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. That is no light part of my penance. I am here tonight to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

Scrooge: You were always a good friend to me.

Marley: You will be haunted by Three Spirits.'

Scrooge: Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

Marley: It is.

Scrooge: I think I'd rather not.

Marley: Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first, when the bell tolls One.

Scrooge: Couldn't I take them all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

Marley: (*Other spirits begin coming in from the back of the house and walking in the aisles.*) 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. Look to see me no more;

(*Marley begins walking down the steps into the audience. The other spirits begin calling out names of those they seek.*)

And look, for your own sake, so you remember what has passed between us!

(Marley keeps walking and the other spirits turn and follow him out through the back of the house. The wind sounds build to a deafening roar, and Scrooge covers his ears and cowers.)

Scrooge: No! This is Humbug! Humbug I say. *(shouting)* HUMBUG!!!!

(Instantly the sound of wind stops during his last shriek. Scrooge turns and goes to his bed and pulls the curtain shut.)

Stave 2
THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS

(Small Mantle Clock in bedroom Chimes)

(Different Clock...a Church bell chimes in the rear of the theatre)

(Different Clock...another Church bell chimes in the front of the theatre)

(All the clocks chime together, and more, as well as wind sounds)

(Closet door opens and a bright white light comes through)

Past: Ebenezer.....

(Christmas Past speaks his name playfully...like a sister calling her brother.)

Past: Ebenezer.....

(The Spirit of Christmas Past enters, and more light is added, including lights directly into the audience's eyes and into Scrooge's eyes, and then the audience light fades.)

Past: Ebenezer Scrooge! *(in a sing-song manner)*

Scrooge: Are you the Spirit, whose coming was foretold to me?

Past: I am.

Scrooge: Do I know you?

Past: I am your...*(pauses...she should almost say 'sister' but not really)*
I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Scrooge: Long Past?

Past: No. Your past.

Scrooge: Your light is so bright...it hurts my eyes. Go away Spirit. Leave me!

Past: What! Would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those who forced me through whole trains of years to be here?

Scrooge: I did not mean to offend. Tell me Spirit, why have you been brought here?

Past: Your welfare!

Scrooge: Thank you Spirit, but I think a good night's sleep would do me better.

Past: Your reclamation, then. Take heed! *(Extends her hand outward toward him)*
Rise! and walk with me!

Scrooge: No Spirit, leave me be!

Past: Touch my hand! *(Sound of Spirit voice is louder and echoes around the theatre. Wind howls and lights change, leaf gobos, etc., Spirit glows white and Scrooge is in a very cool blue light)*

Scrooge: *(moving downstage center, away from the Spirit)* Good Heaven! I grew up in this place. I was a boy here!

Past: Your lip is trembling. And what is that upon your cheek?

Scrooge: It's nothing but a blemish. Lead on Spirit

Past: You recollect the way?

Scrooge: Remember it? I could walk it blindfold.

(Boy Scrooge, who is about 12 years old [the same actor as the boy caroler], enters and walks slowly around to sit on the stoop of the schoolhouse.)

Past: Strange to have forgotten it for so many years! Let us go on.

(Lights come up as children enter from around the corner and gather together downstage away from Boy Scrooge, laughing and playing.. Then, by the time his name is mentioned, Master Higgins comes around the corner carrying several large wrapped boxes, and several schoolbooks.)

Scrooge: There's Elizabeth and Sarah Ludlow, and Thomas Hatch and William James [Violet Ross]...and there's Master Higgins...*(waves at them, but no one responds) [fewer children could be used, but there should be at least three, plus Higgins]*

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

(Higgins gives each of the children presents and they thank him and wish him Merry Christmas and exit. Then Higgins crosses to the stoop where Boy Scrooge is sitting as he rises to receive his 'present' ...the books. Higgins exits, and Boy

Scrooge sits back down on the steps with his books next to him. He leans over in despair and sobs gently.)

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

Scrooge: Poor boy...I just wish...but it's too late now.

Past: 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.

Past: *(The spirit nods and smiles, then waves hand and a little girl enters quickly from around the corner. She is about nine years old and is wearing a cameo on the end of a necklace. Clearly, the necklace is 'too large' for her, and must have been her mother's.)*

Boy Scrooge: *(rising)* Fanny?

Fan: *(she hugs him)* Dear, dear brother. I have come to bring you home, dear brother! *(separate from hugging)* To bring you home, home, home!

Boy Scrooge: Home, little Fan?

Fan: Yes! Home, for good and all. Home, forever and ever. *(‘cheat’ to audience)* 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, and so I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; *(turns back directly to BS)* 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.

Boy Scrooge: You are quite a woman, little Fan!

(An older man enters. It is Scrooge's father.)

Benjamin S: *(loudly upstage)* Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!

Higgins: *(from offstage)* Yes, Mister Scrooge.

Scrooge: Father! *(Runs to Benjamin Scrooge and embraces him. Fanny stays in the center in front of the stoop and just turns slightly to watch the action.)*

I'm sorry...I'm so sorry...

BenjaminS: It wasn't your fault...I know that now. It was the *sickness* that took her from us. *(Fanny holds her necklace cameo and looks down at it.)* You nearly died, too. I almost lost you both. *(pauses)* But now we can all be together again. And we will stay together...you...me....Fanny....

(They look over at her and she is smiling...and they all freeze. Light over Fan turns cold steel blue)

Past: *(with her hand over her own necklace)* Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. But such a large heart.

Scrooge: So she had. You're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!

Past: She died a woman, *(light on Little Fan and Boy Scrooge changes to a steel-blue ghost light)* and had, as I think, children.

(‘Dead Fan’ dialogue is heard through loudspeakers in the house. The words seem to move from the stage through to the back of the house with a sort of ‘Poltergeist’ sound effect. There is no visible ‘Older/Dead Fan’...the clues have been there, but no one is to absolutely know for certain the revelation yet to come.)

Scrooge: One child. *(Dead Fan’s Voice: Ebenezer...)*

Past: True. Your nephew. *(Dead Fan’s Voice: Take care of my son...)*

Scrooge: Yes. *(Dead Fan’s Voice: Take care of my son...)*

(Past waves hand, and lights fade on Little Fan and Boy Scrooge and they exit as a tracery warehouse window lights the middle of the stage. Fezziwig enters and sets his desk into place and finishes his work in a ledger.)

Past: Do you know this place?

Scrooge: *(in a leveled tone)* Know it? I was apprenticed here! *(Lights up on Fezziwig at his desk)*

(in a reminiscing voice) Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!

(Fezziwig rubbed his hands; adjusts his waistcoat and laughs)

Fezziwig: Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!

(Dick Wilkins and Y Scrooge enter quickly and stand on each side of Fezziwig. They are both about eighteen years old.)

Scrooge: *(becoming more excited)* Dick Wilkins, to be sure. Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick.

Fezziwig: Yo ho, my boys! No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up, before a man can say Jack Robinson!

(Y Scrooge and Dick race off and start putting things aside.)

Hilli-ho! Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!

Dickens: *(Intro music begins, playing through the Dickens dialogue, and Young Scrooge and Wilkins clear the counting house tables away and the bench/desk. People enter and they greet each other. Children come in as well and mingle with the guests, who include young and old alike. Mrs. Fezziwig is there, and even the Baker and the Milkman.)*

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

(Young Scrooge is sitting on a bench downstage center with his friend, Young Dick Wilkins and they are talking with each other and Dick takes a small pouch from his pocket and gives it to Y Scrooge. Belle has been watching from upstage and is turning and pacing nervously. Young Scrooge is nervous as well, and Dick is talking with him, smiling, and looking in Belle's direction once in a while. Finally, Belle walks toward the bench, and Dick excitedly tells Y Scrooge she is coming, and they stand up, and offer her the seat, and then Ebenezer sits down next to her and Dick excuses himself and goes to join the other guests for the dance.)

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk. In came Mrs Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile, and the Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker, and the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow.

Fezziwig: *(Begin Dance Music)* Strike up the fiddle! Everyone, Dance! It's Christmas!

(During beginning 10 seconds of music, dancers line up and bow/curtsy...everyone except Belle and Y Scrooge joins in the dance)

The music grows louder...whirling dancers around the stage behind Belle and Scrooge. The lights change differently and the dancers become a part of the background.

(The following dialogue is spoken, but is not necessarily loud enough for the audience to hear, except for emphasizing certain phrases that are important. But the expressions and reactions by Belle and Scrooge are very real. Everything is spaced out to allow 'awkward silences', with large spaces between responses. It is a dance of words.)

Belle: Oh, Ebenezer, let's dance! *(stands and pulls YS hand to follow)*

Y Scrooge: Would you mind, a little later perhaps...there's something I wish to talk about...something.....important.

Belle: *(sits back down)* Yes, Ebenezer?

Y Scrooge: I finished my apprentice...and...well...father introduced me to Mister Jacob Marley, and he has a place for me at his business...in London.

Belle: In London? But what about Mister Fezziwig?

Y Scrooge: He said it was time for me to make my mark. It has been seven years this very night. *(pause)* Belle...?

Belle: Yes, Ebenezer?

Y Scrooge: We have known each other for such a long time, have we not?

Belle: A very long time, to be sure.

Y Scrooge: Belle?

Belle: Ebenezer....

Y Scrooge: You and Fan are such good friends with each other...and father likes you...and so does Sarah.... Belle...each time I see you...I...

Belle: *(She is having difficulty hearing him, and so she has to speak louder over the music. The audience should be able to start hearing her now.)*

Yes, Ebenezer?

(music changes and clock begins to chime—the party will end soon, so Y Scrooge has to make his move)

Y Scrooge: *(speaking louder)* I have something very important to ask you, Belle.

(louder) There is nothing so important...nothing that matters more to me... Belle...?

Belle: Yes?

Y Scrooge: Dearest Belle *(music stops just as he shouts)* Will you marry me?

(Everyone turns and looks. Y Scrooge is embarrassed. All are silent, waiting for Belle's response.)

Belle: *(shouts, even though she doesn't have to, but to put YS at ease)* **Yes!** *(quieter)* Yes, I will marry you, Ebenezer.

(Everyone cheers. Music begins again and the guests begin to leave as Dickens begins his dialogue. The Fezziwigs give each of the guests presents as they are leaving, and Young Scrooge and Belle move around upstage of the bench and at mid center of the stage YS pulls her back and spins her around to face him as he bends his knee and slips the ring on Belle's finger, with the Fezziwigs watching with delight. They all exit together.)

Dickens: *(after cheer, with music)* Finally, when the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up, Mr and Mrs Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. And thus, the cheerful voices faded away into the night, along with much good cheer and merriment.

(Old Scrooge laughed and cheered with everyone else at the engagement, and now watches as YS and Belle move to the door and be given the last presents. He realizes he is crying tears of both joy and sadness.)

Past: What is the matter?

Scrooge: Nothing in particular.

Past: Something, I think.

Scrooge: *(protesting the thought that he was caught up in the emotion of the engagement)* It isn't that. It isn't that, Spirit. *(pause)* Fezziwig had the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power was in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it was impossible to add and count them up. What then?

Past: 'Twas a small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.

Scrooge: Small?

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

Scrooge: The happiness he gave, was quite as great as if it cost a fortune. No. No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.

(Church bells toll)

Past: My time grows short. Quick!

(Past waves arm and Young Scrooge enters and sits on a bench located downstage center. He is on the SR side of the bench with his body turned slightly to the right, attending to his reading and writing in a ledger book. Belle enters from SL, moving slowly downstage...pausing somewhat...she knows she has to do this...and then finally moves down to the bench. Y Scrooge keeps busy with his work, barely recognizing she is there. He doesn't even take off his hat or stand.)

Belle: *(kindly)* Ebenezer?

Y Scrooge: *(without looking up from his writing)* Belle?

Belle: Be assured, I have asked you here for good reason.

Y Scrooge: Be assured? Be assured that Mr Marley will not take kindly to such respites...of that you can be assured!

Belle: *(with somewhat sarcastic recollection)* 'There is nothing so important...nothing that matters more to me'.

(YS glances over, about to comment, but turns back to his work)

But I matter little. To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; 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.

Y Scrooge: What Idol has displaced you?

Belle: A golden one.

Y Scrooge: Humph...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. Ever since... (*sitting down on the bench*) (*softer*) ever since Fan's death... I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?

Y Scrooge: What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? Don't you see? It is all I have left!... (*quieter*) It is all I have left.

First my father, then Fanny... (*pauses*)

I am not changed towards *you*.

(*Belle shakes her head.*)

Am I?

Belle: 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.

Y Scrooge: (*somewhat angrily*) 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.

Y Scrooge: Have I ever sought release?

Belle: In words—no. Never.

Y 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!

Y Scrooge: (*Halfheartedly*) 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...*(tearfully)* I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

Y Scrooge: Belle...*(Young Scrooge is about to speak, but is interrupted)*

Belle: *(continuing, composing herself)* 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!

Scrooge: *(to Past, knowing perfectly well what is about to follow)* Spirit! Show me no more!

(Belle turns and takes a couple steps, but stops. She looks down at her hand, and turns back. Belle removes the ring on her finger and places it on the bench next to Young Scrooge. Ebenezer Scrooge takes the ring from his pocket he has kept all those years and looks at it.)

(softly) Goodbye, Ebenezer.

(Belle turns and walks away. Young Scrooge does not get up and run after her, but instead looks down and picks up the ring, puts it in his pocket, and exits.)

Scrooge: Enough! Please...I implore you....Conduct me home. Oh, why do you delight to torture me?

Past: One shadow more!

Scrooge: No more! *(pause)*

No more.

I don't wish to see it.

Show me no more!

(Past waves arm and Belle enters S.R., although she is much older now, about 45, with her braided hair now worn on top of her head, and is with her young daughter (who should be 11-13). They are laughing when the scene opens and a man (who is 48 years old) enters carrying nicely wrapped parcels. Instead of 'wrapping paper' they are actually wrapped in a satin colored material.)

Sarah W: *(running to greet him)* Father, you're home!

Old DW: *(hugging his daughter)* Of course I'm home. It's Christmas Eve, where else would I be? Oh, I just wish Mister Fezziwig was still alive. We used to have the grandest parties at the warehouse. There was dancing and singing and games....

Sarah W: At the warehouse?... *Your* warehouse?

Old DW: I was just an apprentice there...not much older than your brother William. *(sadly)* How I miss those days. *(pauses, turns to Belle while Sarah W sits on the floor shaking the presents to see if she can guess what is inside)* That reminds me Belle. I saw an old friend of ours this afternoon.

Belle: Oh Dick...who was it?

Old DW: Guess!

Old Belle: How can I? ...I don't know. *(pause)* Ebeneez...*(stops short, catching herself)* Mr Scrooge?

Old DW: 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.

Old Belle: I feel so sorry for him...he was such a good friend to you, Dick, and...*(pause)*...well, we are together, all of us...I love you dear husband.

Old DW: I love you Belle. *(freeze, lights fade on the Wilkins family, and then Old DW and Sarah W exit together, leaving Old Belle frozen on the bench)*

Scrooge: Spirit! Remove me from this place.

Past: I told you these were shadows of the things that have been.

(lights get whiter and hotter on Past as people from the past come back on stage and move toward Scrooge to haunt him, and they say overlapping phrases, and the voices are also repeated and overlapped surrounding the audience)

Old Belle: *(Crosses around the front of the bench and turns back towards Scrooge)* He was sorry such a good friend I feel so sorry for him....so good sorry for friend him....

Fanny: *(running in quickly to join in with Old Belle)* I have home come to bring you home...to bring you home, home, home....

Belle: *(entering at the same time)*...idol displaced me...You may...the memory of what is past,...have pain in this...may you be happy in the pain in this life you have chosen pain...may have pain in this....pain in this...

Past: *(continuing, talking through the voices)* That they are what they are, do not blame me!

Scrooge: *(the women continue to move toward Scrooge, driving him back towards Christmas Past)*

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

Past: *(the white light pulsing from Past changes to a ghostly steel-blue-light, and Scrooge looks up to see her face)*
Ebenezer....my dear brother....take care of my son...*(with arms outstretched toward him)* take care of my son... Ebenezer.

Scrooge: *(suddenly realizing who Past really is)* Fanny!

(The moment he says that there is a total blackout and complete silence.)

Intermission

Stave 3
THE SECOND OF THE THREE SPIRITS

(Church bell sounds. Then, in the darkness a deep, rich laugh of merriment is heard, and a light begins to glow, emanating from a Cornucopia held by Christmas Present who is seated near a suddenly roaring fireplace adorned with gifts and fruits and greenery. The lights grow brighter over the living room and bedroom areas as the last echo of the Church bell fades.

Present: Ho Ho Ho...Wake up, Scrooge !

Scrooge: *(pulling sheet over his head)* Go away !

Present: *(winds sounds and sheet flies up off the bed)* Come here! Come here and know me better, man.

(Scrooge seems to be drawn over towards Christmas Present, but averting his gaze and acting somewhat timid before him)

Present: *(stands)* I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me!

(Scrooge looks up at Present and as he does, it seems as though Present becomes even larger than life...somewhere between St. Nicholas and Santa Claus)

Present: You have never seen the like of me before!

Scrooge: Never.

Present: Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning...for I am very young...my elder brothers born in these later years?

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

Present: *(solemnly)* More than eighteen hundred.

Scrooge: A tremendous family to provide for.

(Christmas Present begins walking forward, ushering Scrooge forward with him.)

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

Present: Touch my robe!

(Scrooge touches the robe and the lights change and the toys and tree disappear. People enter from all over the stage some carrying packages, the little boy sings, a little girl dances around and the poulterer is carrying a large turkey. There is much good cheer, until two men run into each other dropping their packages. An argument ensues, and much shouting but it is cut short when Christmas Present raises his Cornucopia staff and shines it on the men, and they immediately change their attitude and begin laughing and helping each other pick up their packages and finally wishing each other a Merry Christmas and parting ways.)

Scrooge: Is there a peculiar flavor in what you sprinkle from your torch?

Present: There is. My own.

Scrooge: Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?

Present: To any kindly given. To a poor one most.

Scrooge: Why to a poor one most?

Present: Because it needs it most.

Scrooge: Spirit? I wonder why you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment.

Present: I?

Scrooge: You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day, often the only day on which they can be said to dine at all, wouldn't you?

Present: I?

Scrooge: You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day. And it comes to the same thing.

Present: I seek?

Scrooge: Forgive me if I am wrong. It has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family.

Present: 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 out kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.

(The wind sounds grow louder and lights change as Christmas Present takes Scrooge to the Cratchit house and waves his staff. Lights come up as Mrs.

Cratchit is preparing dinner, along with Belinda, with Peter mashing potatoes in a pot. Additional children are optional, but two other children, a boy and girl could come running in, and sit at the table with their backs to the audience. If they are added to this scene, they are NOT in the post-Tiny Tim death scene.)

(Martha is seen walking in the distance.)

Mrs. Cratchit: What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!

Children: *(Martha enters)* Here's Martha, mother! Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!

Mrs. Cratchit: *(kissing her a dozen times and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with excitement, revealing Martha's maid's outfit she will later wear as the Housemaid at Fred and Elizabeth's party.)*

Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are.

Martha: We'd a deal of cleaning to finish up, mother. And I must return to serve the guests...

Mrs. Cratchit: Well! Never mind so long as you are here now. Sit down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless you!

Peter Cratchit: *(Interrupting before she can sit)* No, no! There's father coming. Hide, Martha, hide!

(Martha hides, and Cratchit enters carrying Tiny Tim on his shoulders.)

Cratchit: *(looking around)* Why, where's our Martha?

Mrs. Cratchit: Not coming.

Cratchit: Not coming? Not coming upon Christmas Day?

Martha: *(Martha jumps out and runs into his arms, laughing)* Surprise!
(everyone laughs)

Mrs. Cratchit: And how did little Tim behave?

Cratchit: *(Belinda and other children carry Tim over to a stool near the fire...clearly Tim is not doing very well on his own, and appears very weak, although his smile still beams through his discomfort.)*

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, because he was a cripple, and it

might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.

(not really believing his own words)
Oh, but he is growing stronger, isn't he?

(Martha and Peter begin putting things on the table.)

Cratchit: *(lifting the towel covering the little goose)* Oh, rarest of all birds!...feathered phenomenon to which a black swan was a matter of course. Why, I have never seen such a goose!

Belinda: And there is apple sauce and gravy, father.

Peter: I fixed the mashed potatoes!

Mrs Cratchit: All the children helped me, Bob. John and Elizabeth even helped me make the stuffing.

Cratchit: Then surely we must give thanks for this wondrous feast.

(they bow their heads, and freeze)

Scrooge: There is so little food...and so many children. How can they be so happy?

Present: And yet they are! Can you not see that?

Scrooge: I do, Spirit. I do.

(lights up)

Cratchit: What a wonderful feast! Surely there is not room for another bite. *(Mrs Cratchit whispers to Martha, who gets up and leaves)*

Peter Cratchit: But father! The pudding! *(other children join in excitedly)* The pudding! The pudding!

Cratchit: Pudding?

(Martha brings in the pudding)

Children: Hooray! Hooray! The pudding...the pudding!

Cratchit: Oh, a wonderful pudding! Truly this pudding is the greatest success ever since our marriage!

: *(Mrs. Cratchit cuts pieces and hands them to each child but there is none left for herself.)*

Martha: Why mother, you have left nothing for yourself. I'm not hungry at all after such a meal. Please...take mine.

Peter: No, take mine.

Mrs. Cratchit: *(pushing aside Peter's offer, but Martha insists and puts her plate in front of her mother. Mrs. Cratchit is somewhat ashamed to take a single morsel of goodness from her children, and yet it is her favorite treat of the season)* Well...perhaps just a bite. *(while taking a single fork-full)* Well, I was worried that perhaps there wasn't enough flour...

Cratchit: *(smiling at Martha for what she has done, and picking up two glasses and a mug from the mantle)* Well then...Martha, since you are not very hungry, perhaps you will join us with a drink. *(pours cider into the glasses, and the mug)*

Martha: Yes father, thank you.

(they raise their glasses)

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

All: Merry Christmas! God Bless us! .

Tim: *(hoisting himself up higher)* God bless us every one!

(Christmas Present waves his staff and they freeze and lights fade on the Cratchit family to only a cold steel blue downlight on the table)

Scrooge: Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

Present: 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, kind Spirit! *(pointing to the torch)* Why do you not save him?

Present: If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race will find him here. What then. If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

Scrooge: He's not my child!

Present: Man, if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. 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.

(Christmas Present waves his staff and the lights restore on the Cratchit family.)

Cratchit: *(raising his glass even higher)* And to Mr Scrooge! I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!

Mrs Cratchit: 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.

Cratchit: My dear, the children! Christmas Day.

Mrs Cratchit: It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks 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, poor fellow.

Cratchit: My dear, *(mildly)* Christmas Day...

Mrs Cratchit: 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!

Cratchit: *(raising his glass once more...but not quite as high as before)*

Mr. Scrooge.

All: *(reluctantly)* Mr. Scrooge. *(freeze)*

(lights fade on Cratchits, and Christmas Present takes Scrooge away and waves his staff. Lights come up revealing two men in dirty coal miner's outfits sitting on the floor with two cups and a bottle, along with a pick ax, small shovel, and kerosene lamp.)

Scrooge: What place is this?

Present: A place where Miners live, who labor in the bowels of the earth. But they know me. See!

Miner 1: *(speaking in Polish—the English translation can be in the program)* ...to good friends. [Do dobrych przyjaciół.]

Miner 2: To good friends! [Do dobrych przyjaciół.]

Miner 1: And may St. Nicholas bless our families' houses and be with them each and every year. [I może (maj; majowy) St *Nicholas* błogosławią (czcić) nasze rodziny ' domy i jest z & (oni) każdy i każdy rok (roczny).]

Miner 2: To St. Nicholas! [Tutaj jest Saint Nicholas!]

Both: St. Nicholas! [Saint Nicholas!]

(They remain)

(Present then waves his staff toward a woman sitting by a small fire outside their lighthouse, with 'optional' man and child)

Irish Woman: *(With an Irish accent)* Dear husband, even though it may be cold, and it may be wet, and the sea threatens our very survival...your heart warms us, your strength keeps us dry, and your faith protects us all. And even though it may seem that my love grows and fades like the light that protects our countrymen, it is also ever constant, like that fire that we keep alive together. On this Christmas night, I once again pledge that love to you, along with the love of our child.

(during this dialogue, Christmas Present waves his staff towards an Old Man is sitting in a chair. He is blind. A child stands near him singing Stille Nacht to him...he is smiling with joy.)

(Everything times out to end together...and finally all of them, in their native tongues, say "Merry Christmas" together...and segue into the Fred party scene. The lights only fade on the Miners, who exit.)

(The sounds of "Merry Christmas" continues in English, because one by one, all the guests are coming in and greeting each other, including the old German man and 'Stille Nacht' girl, and the Irish wife and 'optional' husband and child...people are coming in from all over to Fred's house to join him...old German blind man takes off his glasses and becomes a party guest, lighthouse Irish woman becomes a guest, little children play with each other running around. Fred and his wife, Elizabeth are speaking. Their daughter Fanny has a decorated mask on as the 'hosts' party daughter' and other children might have masks as well.)

Fred: Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!

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

Elizabeth: 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.

Elizabeth: 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 don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking that he is ever going to benefit us with it.

(Martha Cratchit in her maid outfit is walking around with a tray of glasses of wine, serving to the guests.)

Elizabeth: I have no patience with him,

Fred: Oh, I have, and 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 don't lose much of a dinner.

Elizabeth: Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner.

Fred: *(Martha is serving to Fred at this point.)* Well. I'm very glad to hear it, because I haven't great faith in these young housekeepers.

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

Fred: *(laughs)* 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, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, 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. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you. If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds...why, that *would* be something! Well...I do think I shook him yesterday. *(hands his glass to Elizabeth)*

Come everyone...quick! Guess who I am!

(Fred acts out a large bull-like animal, grunting and growling, scraping feet)

Scrooge: Here is a new game. One half hour, Spirit, only one!

Girl: I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!

Fred: What is it?

Girl: It's your Uncle Scrooge!

(everyone laughs)

Fred: He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. *(taking back his wine glass from Elizabeth)* Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, "Uncle Scrooge!"

All: Uncle Scrooge!

Fred: *(softly, caringly)* 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!

(Fred and guests freeze and lights fade)

(Present has aged with his hair very grey...and he stoops over more...clearly he is much older. He walks downstage leading Scrooge along with him and the Fred's party people leave.)

Scrooge: Spirit, you seem so much older now!

Present: I am.

Scrooge: Are spirits' lives so short?

Present: My life upon this globe is very brief. It ends tonight.

Scrooge: Tonight!

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

(Chimes ring and two children walk down the aisle from the rear of the house towards the stage. The actor playing the boy Scrooge plays Ignorance, and the actor playing Tiny Tim plays Want. Lights up in the middle of the aisle where they stop.)

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

Present: It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it. Look. Oh, Man! Look there! Look, look, down there!

(children raise their arms, outstretched, reaching out toward Present)

Scrooge: Spirit, are they yours?

Present: *(leaving the stage to join the children)* They are Man's. 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. Deny it! *(stretching out its hand)* Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And abide the end! *(Christmas Present turns and begins to exit toward the rear of the house with the children)*

Scrooge: Have they no refuge or resource?

Present: Are there no prisons?

Are there no workhouses?

(they exit)

Stave 4
THE LAST OF THE SPIRITS

(clock strikes 12 midnight. As it strikes, a black-robed figure rises from the top of the bed, as if the bed itself was growing upwards and the curtains lifted as sleeves, while the bed moves forward from upstage to downstage behind Scrooge.)

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

(Future points forward)

Scrooge: 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?

(Future seems to nod his head)

Scrooge: Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any spectre 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?'

(Future points to some men gathered together)

Scrooge: Then show me! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Show me, Spirit!

(lights up on men)

Old Joe: Well! Old Scratch has got his own at last, hey?

Gentleman 2: So I am told.

Old Joe: When did he die?

Gentleman 2: Last night, I believe.

Gentleman 1: Why, what was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

Old Joe: *(yawning)* God knows.

Gentleman 2: What has he done with his money?

Old Joe: I haven't heard. *(yawning again)* Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know.

(all laugh)

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?

Gentlemen 1: I don't mind going if a lunch is provided, but I must be fed, if I make one.

(laughter)

Old Joe: 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. Good day!

(Gentlemen 1 & 2 leave...and Old Joe makes sure they are gone and crosses to the door and knocks the 'all clear'. The door opens and charwoman comes out of the house carrying a large sack, followed by Mrs. Dilber with her little sack and then the undertaker, who is carrying an old oil lantern. It turns out that Old Joe is a Fence!...and that he made his money the old fashioned way—he stole it.)

Charwoman: Let the charwoman alone to be the first! Let the laundress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker's man alone to be the third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!

Old Joe: You couldn't have met in a better place. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two ain't strangers. Ha, ha! We're all suitable to our calling, we're well matched. Show me what you have.

(women start arguing with each other, and the Undertaker sees his opportunity to go first and conducts his business with Old Joe)

Charwoman: What odds then? What odds, Mrs Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. He always did!

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

Charwoman: Why then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who's the wiser? We're not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose?

Mrs Dilber: No, indeed! We should hope not.

Charwoman: Very well, then! That's enough. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?

Mrs Dilber: No, indeed. *(laughs)*

Charwoman: If he wanted to keep them 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.

Charwoman: *(seeing that the Undertaker receiving his money)* Hey!

(while the women have been arguing, the Undertaker took advantage and was showing Old Joe his items, which he keeps taking out of pocket after pocket...which should be rather comical in itself. Everything the Undertaker brings is looked at carefully, and then Old Joe takes money from his pocket and gives it to the Undertaker.)

Old Joe: *(taking the lantern and keeping it)* That's your account, and I wouldn't give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next?

(Mrs Dilber pushes forward opens her bundle...some sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few books.)

Old Joe: I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself. That's your account.

Mrs. Dilber: Hey!!!

Old Joe: And if you ask me for another penny, I'll take back half a crown!
(Dilber is upset, and the Undertaker waves for her to leave first, then follows.)

Charwoman: And now undo my bundle, Joe.

(Opens bundle)

Old Joe: What do you call this? Bed-curtains?

Charwoman: Ah. Bed-curtains!

Old Joe: You don't mean to say you took them down, rings and all, with him lying there?

Charwoman: Why not?'

Old Joe: You were born to make your fortune, and you'll certainly do it.

Charwoman: I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as he was, I promise you, Joe. (*Old Joe holds the lantern near the blankets.*) Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now.

Old Joe: His blankets?

Charwoman: Whose do you think? He isn't likely to catch cold without them, I dare say.

Old Joe: I hope he didn't die of any thing catching!

Charwoman: Don't you be afraid of that. (*Joe then is looking at the shirt...holding it up to the light*) Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it. 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 it?

Charwoman: Putting it on him to be buried in! Somebody was fool enough to do it...but I took it off again. (*Joe looks in horror*) If calico ain't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for anything. He can't look uglier than he did in that one.

(*Old Joe spreads his coins out for her*)

Ha! This is the end of it, you see. He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!

(*they exit laughing, and the lights fade*)

Scrooge: Spirit! I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now.

(*Scene changes to the bed with ragged sheet covering a body*)

Merciful Heaven, what is this?

(*Future points to the body.*)

Scrooge: (*walking towards the bed*) Spirit! This is a fearful place. I must leave it, but I shall not its lesson, trust me. Let me go!

(*Future remains pointing.*)

Scrooge: (*not wanting to look at the wrapped body in the bed*) I understand you, and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power.

(Future remains unchanged.)

Scrooge: *(turning away from the bed and walking part way down the stairs)* 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!

(Future points to the side of the stairs where a woman (with optional child...perhaps the actor playing Tiny Tim) is standing. A man enters from upstage left and meets her.)

D. Wife: Is it good...or bad?

D. Husband: Bad.

D. Wife: We are quite ruined?

D. Husband: No. There is hope yet, Caroline.

D. Wife: If he relents, there is! Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened.

D. Husband: He is past relenting. He is dead.

D. Wife: Dead? Oh, thank heaven! *(Wife puts hand over her mouth when she realizes how uncaring it was to say such a thing.)*

D. Husband: What 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.

D. Wife: To whom will our debt be transferred?'

D. Husband: 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 tonight with light hearts, Caroline!

(They both smile and hug, then exit)

Scrooge: Let me see some tenderness connected with a death, or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be forever present to me.

(lights up on Cratchit house. It is not as bright as before, and the cold steel blue downlight is cast over the table...Spirit points ... Mrs. Cratchit and her daughter, Belinda are sewing a "Timothy Cratchit" embroidered gravesite blanket", and Peter is reading from a book. It is very important that the hearth not be lit.)

Peter: *(reading)* 'And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them.'

(Mrs Cratchit puts her sewing down and puts her hand up to her face to shield her children from seeing her tears)

Mrs Cratchit: The color hurts my eyes...

They're better now again. It makes them weak by candlelight; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time. *(Cratchit begins walking slowly from the cemetery toward the Cratchit house.)*

Peter: Past it rather. But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.

Mrs Cratchit: I have known him walk with -- I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.

Peter: And so have I. Often.

Belinda: And so have I.

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

And there is your father at the door now!

Children: *(running over to greet and embrace him)* Father ! Father ! Father ! *(Mrs. Cratchit is right behind them, and he takes off his coat and hat and gloves and the children take them away, leaving him alone with his wife)*

Mrs Cratchit: Come in by the fire, Bob. I have your tea ready.

Cratchit: Tea. Yes, that would be nice. Some tea.

(looking at the needlework inscription they have been sewing) Why, it is almost completed! You will certainly be finished before I go again next Sunday.

Mrs Cratchit: You went today, then, Robert?

Cratchit: 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 every Sunday.

(breaking down into sobs) My little, little child! My little child!

(Mrs Cratchit consoles him, and they go back to the table to be near their children)

Cratchit: I saw Mr. Scrooge's nephew today, and even though I had scarcely seen him of late, when he saw me on the street he mentioned my looking a little down, and wondered what had happened to distress me, and so I told him. On which, for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, said 'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit, and heartily sorry for your good wife'. By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know.

Mrs Cratchit: Knew what, my dear.

Cratchit: Why, that you were a good wife.

Peter: Everybody knows that.

Cratchit: Very well observed, my boy. I hope they do.

'Heartily sorry', he said, 'for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way', he said, giving me his card, 'that's where I live. Pray come to me.'

Now, it wasn't, for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.

Mrs Cratchit: I'm sure he's a good soul!

Cratchit: You would be surer of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised -- mark what I say! -- if he got Peter a better situation.

Mrs Cratchit: Only hear that, Peter.

Belinda: And then, Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.

Peter: Get along with you!

Cratchit: It's just as likely as not, one of these days; though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and when ever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim -- shall we -- or this first parting that there was among us?

Children: Never, father!

Cratchit: And I know...I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

Children: No, never, father!

Cratchit: I am very happy. I am very happy.

(lights fade on Cratchit house, wind sounds begin and get louder)

Scrooge: Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?

(lights change to cemetery lighting, with leaves and somber lighting but there is very little light on one certain tombstone)

Scrooge: The courts through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come.

(Future points to the 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?

(Future keeps pointing to the gravestone)

Scrooge: 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!

(Future keeps pointing to the tombstone)

(Scrooge moves toward the tomb, lights come up on the inscription, and he sees his name upon the gravestone)

Scrooge: Am I that man who lay upon the bed?

(Future points his finger from the grave to Scrooge)

Scrooge: No, Spirit! Oh no, no!

Spirit! Hear me! I am not the man I was. 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?

(Future lowers arm and backs away toward the bed. Lights isolate only Scrooge.)

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. 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!

(lights fade as wind sounds increase)

Stave 5
THE END OF IT

(Church bells are heard in the dark, then lights up on Scrooge's bedroom brightly lit in the morning light)

Scrooge: *(in his bed, speaking in his sleep)* 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!

(wakes up and looks around) They are not torn down...*(laughs)* they are not torn down, rings and all. *(laughs even more)* They are here *(gleefully)* -- I am here -- 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. *(shouts)* A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!

There's the saucepan that the gruel was in! There's where the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There's where the Ghost of Christmas Present sat! It's all right, it's all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!

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.

(opens his bedroom door and runs out in hall...[switch places with duplicate Scrooge])

(from offstage) Merry Christmas everybody !

(duplicate Scrooge enters) Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!

(Duplicate Scrooge runs to window, opens it and leans out at the same time Real Scrooge opens the window above the door to his house and leans out)

Scrooge: *(looking down at a boy in the street)* What's to-day?

Boy: Eh?

Scrooge: What's today, my fine fellow?

Boy: Today? 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.

Hallo, my fine fellow!

Boy: Hallo!

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: G'wan!

Scrooge: No, no. I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I'll give you half-a-crown!

(Boy races off excitedly)

Scrooge: I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. He sha'nt know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be!

(both Scrooges close their windows, then the duplicate Scrooge sits and writes a note and then exits through his door and the real Scrooge takes over and opens the front door as the boy and poulterer arrive with a huge turkey)

Scrooge: Merry Christmas sir! Oh what a handsome Turkey! Surely he never could have stood upon his legs...why he would have snapped them short off in a minute like sticks of sealing wax! *(laughs)*

(giving the man money) Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town. You must have a cab. Here. *(gives man even more money)*

Merry Christmas ! (*poulterer exits*)

And now for you my good man, just as I promised. (*gives the boy money*) Merry Christmas ! (*shakes the boy's hand*)

(*boy exits and Scrooge turns to go inside, sees the knocker, pats it with his hand*)
And Merry Christmas to you, dear Jacob. (*laughs*)

Dickens: (*lights up on Dickens sitting in a chair near the fireplace which he quietly moved into during the aisle scene*) The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried.

(*rising from the chair*) Now, shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaster over it, and been quite satisfied.

He dressed himself all in his best, and at last was ready to go out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile.

(*Scrooge enters and walks into the audience, greeting people...speaking the same sort of dialogue as Dickens quotes*)

He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humored fellows said, 'Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!' And Scrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

(*Gentlemen enter and see Scrooge and immediately turn to walk away*)

Scrooge: (*to Gentleman 1*) My dear sir. How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. (*to Gentleman 2, grabbing his hand and shaking it profusely*) A Merry Christmas to you, sir!

Gentlemen: (*together*) 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 please, will you have the goodness to accept...(*Scrooge whispers in the ear of Gentleman 1*)

Gentleman 1: Lord bless me! My dear Mr Scrooge, are you serious? *(leans over and whispers in Gentleman 2's ear)*

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

Gentleman 2: My dear sir. I don't know what to say to such munificence...

Scrooge: Don't say anything please. Come and see me. Will you come and see me?

Gentleman 2: I will!

Scrooge: Thank you. I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you! *(the Gentlemen exit through back of house and Scrooge follows and then continues to talk to audience member and greeting them and then moves back towards the steps)*

Dickens: *(the party guests at Fred's house move quietly in position and freeze during the following dialogue)* He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk -- that anything -- could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. *(Housekeeper unfreezes and moves toward Scrooge.)* But he made a dash, and did it.

Scrooge: Is your master at home, my dear? Nice girl! Very.

Housekeeper: Yes, sir.

Scrooge: Where is he, my love?

Housekeeper: He's in the dining room, sir, along with mistress. I'll show you upstairs, if you please.

Scrooge: Thank you. He knows me. I'll go in here, my dear.

(Lights come up on Fred's living room, with party guests. Elizabeth is there with her young son and a young girl is playing with a friend nearby with her back to everyone...it is the same party that was seen in the dream, and all the guests are exactly where they were before, only Scrooge is now coming into the room.)

(Fred acts out a large bull-like animal, grunting and growling, scraping feet)

Girl: I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!

Fred: What is it?

Girl: *(Scrooge comes into the room and stands right behind Fred without him knowing)*
It's your Uncle Scrooge!
(everyone laughs...then stops)

Scrooge: Fred!

Fred: *(turns around)* Why bless my soul...is it really you?

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

Fred: Of course I will let you in, Uncle. *(he grasps his hand, and Fred's wife, Elizabeth, hugs Scrooge)*

Scrooge: Dear girl, please forgive me. I can see why my nephew fell in love with you.
(a little girl runs over to them, wearing a mask)

Fanny: Father, Mother, hurry! We're going to play Blind Man's Bluff!

Fred: And this is our daughter...*(she takes off her mask)*...Fanny.

Scrooge: *(with tears in his eyes)* Fan! My dear Fan. *(sinks down on one knee to face her)*
What a fool I have been all these years. *(pauses and takes the chain from around his neck with the cameo on it)*

This is for you...it was your Grandmother's. *(puts it around her neck)* Merry Christmas, little Fan. *(stands)*

(turns to Fred and Emily and all the guests) Merry Christmas.

Everyone: Merry Christmas!

Fred: *(raises glass)* To my Uncle Scrooge!

Everyone: Uncle Scrooge!

(freeze)

Dickens: *(lights change as Dickens steps forward and moves down center. The guests unfreeze and shake hands, pat on back and exit jovially in silence as the narration*

continues. The lights fade down around them and only a spot on Dickens remains. Party guests set only Scrooge's Counting House desk as they exit.)

Everyone was overjoyed at Scrooge's transformation and they accepted him as their most honored guest. Uncle Scrooge he was to his nephew, and Uncle Scrooge he became to them all. Oh, such a wonderful party, with wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, such wonderful happiness!

(lights up on Counting House) Now...the next morning Scrooge arrived early at the Counting House. (enters) Oh, he was very early there so he could be first, and surely catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon, and he did it, yes he did!

The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was a full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time!

Scrooge sat at his desk with the door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

(Cratchit enters quickly, his hat and coat already off, and he hangs them up and then turns and sees his desk is not there.)

Scrooge: Cratchit! *(he shouts, but quickly turns away smiling, and stifles a laugh)*

(Cratchit looks down dejectedly, but begins to move toward Scrooge)

Cratchit! *(he shouts louder, and almost falls over laughing...trying to keep his "mean face", but it is difficult)*

Cratchit: *(moving quickly to Scrooge)* Yes, Mister Scrooge?

Scrooge: Just what do you mean by coming here at this time of day? *(he can barely keep it in...and has to turn away and shield his face from Cratchit, although the audience sees that he is smiling)*

Cratchit: I am very sorry, sir. I am behind my time.

Scrooge: You are? Why yes, I think you are.

(very menacingly) You were warned Mr. Cratchit. You were warned!

(Scrooge step away from his desk and walks past Cratchit to the coat rack and takes Cratchit's coat and hat)

Cratchit: *(imploing him)* But its only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. Please, Mr. Scrooge! I was making rather merry yesterday, sir, and I guess I forgot the time.

Scrooge: *(handing the coat and hat to Cratchit)* Now, I'll tell you what, my friend, I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore... and therefore...

I am about to raise your salary! *(doubles over in laughter...and points at Cratchit and laughs some more...Cratchit is in shock and disbelief...not only at what Scrooge has said, but for seeing Scrooge laughing)*

Cratchit: Mister Scrooge?

Scrooge: A merry Christmas, Bob! *(reaches out to shake Cratchit's hand...but Cratchit does not take it...he doesn't trust what Scrooge is saying. Scrooge withdraws his hand sheepishly.)*

(sincerely) A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I will raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very morning, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob!

Cratchit: Mister Scrooge!

Scrooge: *(getting his own coat and hat)* Yes, we shall...right now...before you dot another I, Bob Cratchit!

(Scrooge puts on his own coat, but Cratchit doesn't yet.) But first...we are going to buy another coal-scuttle. And when we come back, we will make up the fires and bring some warmth into these cold rooms. That I promise.

(Cratchit extends his own hand...and they both shake hands, smiling)

(freeze, lights fade, and in the dark, Scrooge takes a very nice coat off the stand and puts it on Cratchit, and gives him a nicer hat, too. Then Scrooge and Cratchit move to the steps.)

Dickens: *(Meanwhile, reading from his chair SR)* Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more. And to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father.

Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms.

His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him.

Cratchit: *(wearing a very nice coat and hat)* He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world.

Dickens: He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.

(Tiny Tim runs up aisle from back of house to Cratchit standing at base of step, Scrooge behind him on stage)

Scrooge: May that be truly said of us, and all of us!

Dickens: And so, as Tiny Tim observed,

Tiny Tim: God Bless Us, Every One!

S and C: God Bless Us, Every One!

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Cast of Characters - (17 Actors playing 60 roles)

Character [approximate age played]* (Stave Number)

Scrooge [55] (1/2/3/4/5)

Dickens [55] (1/2/5) / **Old Blind German Grandfather** [55] (3) / **Fred Party Guest** (3/5) / **Spirit of Christmas Future** (4)

Nephew Fred [35] (1/3/5) / **Fezziwig Party Guest** (2) / **Undertaker** (4)

Belle [16 then 19] (2) / **Elizabeth** [28] (3/5) / **Destitute Wife** [26] (4)

Young Scrooge [18 then 21] (2) / **Fred Party Guest** (3/5) / **Destitute Husband** [27] (4)

Boy Scrooge [12] (2) / **Caroler** [13] (1) / **Ignorance** [13] (3) / **Turkey Boy** / [13] (5) / **Fezziwig Party Boy** [13] (2) [Available to be a 1950's or Present-day child]

Old Belle [45] (1/2) / **Mrs. Fezziwig** [50] (2) / **Charwoman** (4) / **Irish Woman** [35] (3) / **Fred Party Guest** (3)

Dick Wilkins [17] (2) / **Thomas Hatch** [14] (2) / **Peter Cratchit** [15] (3/4)

Jacob Marley [55] (1) / **Present-day Father** (1) / **Old Dick Wilkins** [48] (1/2) / **Old Joe** (4) / **Poulterer** (5) / **Package Argument Townsperson** (3) / **Miner 2** (3)

Gentleman 1 (1/4/5) / **Spirit of Christmas Present** (3) / **Master Higgins** (2) / **Fezziwig Party Baker** (2)

Gentleman 2 (1/4/5) / **Mr. Fezziwig** [55] (2) / **Package Argument Man** (3) / **Miner 1** (3)

Tiny Tim [6] (3/5) / **Mr. Fezziwig Party Child** (2) / **Want** (3) [Available to be a 1950's or Present-day child]

Little Fan [9] (2) / **Fred's Daughter Fanny** [8] (3/5) / **Fezziwig Party Girl** (2) [Available to be a 1950's or Present-day child]

Spirit of Christmas Past [18] (2) / **Martha Cratchit** [18] (3) / **Fred's Housekeeper (played as Martha Cratchit)** [18] (3/5)

Sarah Wilkins [12] (1/2) / **Emily Ludlow** [12] (2) / **Fezziwig Party Girl** [12] (2) / **StilleNacht girl** [12] (3) / **Fred's Party Girl** [12] (3/5) / **Belinda Cratchit** [12] (3/4) [Available to be a 1950's or Present-day child]

Mrs. Cratchit [40] (3/4) / **1950's Mother** [35] (1) / **Mrs. Dilber** [40] (4) / **Fezziwig Party Housemaid** [40] (2)

Bob Cratchit [42] (1/3/4/5) / **Fezziwig Party Milkman** [42] (2)

Groupings

Fezziwig Party -

Scrooge
Dickens
Spirit of Christmas Past

Principal Characters:

Mr. Fezziwig
Mrs. Fezziwig
Young Scrooge
Dick Wilkins
Belle

Generic Party Guests played by:

Fred

Misc. Roles mentioned:

The Baker (played by Gentleman 1)
The Housemaid (played by Mrs. Cratchit)
The Milkman (played by Bob Cratchit)

Children:

Little Girl (played by Belinda Cratchit)
Little Girl (played by Little Fan)
Little Boy (played by Boy Scrooge)

That will give us 7 Adult Dancers (Young Scrooge and Belle do not dance), and 3 Children Dancers.

Groupings (continued)

Fred's Party –

Scrooge
Spirit of Christmas Present

Principal Characters:

Fred
Elizabeth
Fanny (Fred and Elizabeth's Daughter)

Generic Party Guests:

Irish Woman into Party Guest
Dickens/Old Blind German Grandfather into Party Guest
Stille Nacht Girl into Party Girl (so her costume must be more generic than just 'German').
Young Adult Party Guest

Misc. Roles Mentioned:

Housekeeper ("these young housekeepers"-she is serving the wine) She is actually Martha Cratchit and her job that she arrives at the Cratchit house from is working at Fred and Elizabeth's house.

Package Drop Scene for Christmas Present

Available 'townspeople': They are not playing 'themselves', just bodies for the scene.

Dickens
Fred
Belle
Irish Woman/Older Belle
Package Drop Townsperson who exits back of house and can re-enter as Miner 1
Package Drop Townsperson who exits back of house and can re-enter as Miner 2
Little Fan
Young Scrooge
Boy Scrooge

Critical ‘Doubling’

Doubling of actors in a show like *A Christmas Carol* is very difficult, because it is easy to have character confusion. Instead, it is best to use the possible confusion as ‘foreshadowing’ or character ‘irony’ that reinforces the message of elements needed for redemption.

Ignorance and Want being played by Boy Scrooge and Tiny Tim. (We usually cast a girl for that role, so the “this girl is Want” is no problem. If a boy is cast, then he must realize that he will be playing the part as a girl for Want.)

Little Fan who was Scrooge’s sister must be Fred and Elizabeth’s daughter Fanny.

Belle, Elizabeth (Fred’s wife), and Destitute Wife need to be played by the same person. Although it should be clear that it isn’t *actually* Belle who is any of those other roles, there is an overlap in irony that should be present to anyone realizing the similarities in actresses, just as having the actor who plays Young Scrooge is the Destitute Husband. Basically, in a ‘poor’ life, those two *would* have been together, and be at the mercy of men like Scrooge.

Christmas Past must be portrayed by someone who is an ‘older Fanny’ who dies between the time of the schoolhouse scene and the later Belle/Young Scrooge scene. The fact that the actress who is portraying both Martha Cratchit, who works for Scrooge’s nephew, and also playing Scrooge’s departed sister, ‘older’ Fan, is very important.

Comments, suggestions, errors, or omissions made be made to starlitr@comcast.net .

Thank you,

Stephen J. Cramer

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Appendix

Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!

Alles schläft; einsam wacht

Nur das traute hoch heilige Paar.

Holder Knab' im lockigten Haar,

Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!

Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!

(Schtil uh knocked, Hi leg uh knocked)

(All ess schl ay ft, I in sahm vackt)

(Nure dahs troyta hock hi leg uh parr)

(Hold air kuh knob him lock ig ten harr)

(Schl ahh feh een he mill Cher rlue)

(Schl ahh feh een he mill Cher rlue)

Backstories for Christmas Carol

From research -

I know the work was written in the early 1840s but was it meant to capture the early 1840s or an previous time? People refer to it as Victorian, but was it truly?

The time of plot is perhaps “after 1834”. “And the Union workhouses?” demanded Scrooge. “Are they still in operation?” The Union is a once familiar colloquialism for the workhouse, from its being maintained by a group of parishes formed into a Union in accordance with the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Here is an inconsistency, however. To Scrooge’s joke, Marley’s Ghost set up another cry and “clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.” The Ward patrolled the streets of London at night until the institution of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 (Penguin Eng. Lib.). It is difficult to define the time of plot, but the time is obviously the 19th century.

Dickens made a speech in Manchester on October 5, 1843, immediately before the publication of *Carol*: “Understanding that the relations between himself and his employers involve a mutual duty and responsibility. . . .” We can find through the hearth imagery a clear anticipation of the labour-and-capital problem in *Hard Times*. This social theme is handled in the relationship between Scrooge and Bob Cratchit. Witness the opening scene, for example:

The door of Scrooge’s counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn’t replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed. (9, *Oxford Illustrated*)

Scrooge’s “counting-house” is a microcosm of Victorian society which, in Foucault’s words, keeps “a mechanism that coerces by means of hierarchical observation” (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Vintage Books, 1995] 170). And Scrooge’s monopoly of “coal-box in his own room” suggests the life-and death power the employers wield over their employees, especially in the hungry forties.

The hearth, considered by metonymy as a happy home, hints at the employer’s paternalistic duty to be a benevolent light like the sun. A fire burning in the hearth tells the reader that “home’s like Heaven!” (29), and “shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling” (49) recall the worth of hearth and home to Scrooge who “walks in darkness” (John 12: 35).

On the contrary, the hearth’s light, coming through the window, is contrasted with “a fire (a fire which two men watching the lighthouse made), that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea” (50) warning the approaching danger of shipwreck. It appears to be a memento mori to Scrooge, who thinks that those around him are all “Job’s comforter” (Job 16: 1-5) to him, though Cratchit wears “his white comforter”, the symbol of hearth and home.

After his rebirth, Scrooge “walks as a child of light” (Eph. 5: 8). Scrooge “who loves his brother remains in the light” (1 John 2:10). His fraternal love for Cratchit is also illustrated with the hearth imagery. Dickens’s reconstruction of the labour-and-capital relations based on paternalism is clarified by Scrooge’s closing words: “Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle . . . Bob Cratchit!” (76)

Dickens grew up in a large, poor family and suffered first-hand the cold, cruel realities of the British social system (or lack of it) of the 19th century. As a boy he experienced poverty, hard work, and the embarrassment and horror of seeing his family sent to debtors’ prison. Fortunately for him, his talents as a writer were nurtured and allowed to blossom by those who recognized Dickens’ gift early on. He was able, therefore, to rise up out of the poverty that otherwise could have broken him, and succeed beyond his wildest dreams. He never forgot the conditions under which he started out in life, however, and devoted a great deal of his literary industry to expressing his disgust and contempt for 19th century British society. I believe he was more of an active critic than a social commentator. He wanted the world to know, in painstaking detail and in no uncertain terms, all about these conditions under which millions of people lived, suffered and were destroyed.

“A Ghost Story of Christmas” is the subtitle of *Carol*, and the words “Ghost” and “Spirits” are found in the chapter titles. The structure is based on fantasy; Dickens has described Scrooge’s supernatural experiences and happy ending.

Backstory creations from the mind of Stephen J. Cramer

Ebenezer Scrooge

By my calculations, he is 54 years old when the story begins.

Father's name was Benjamin Scrooge, and he was a well-respected member of the exchange. He and his son-in-law, Jonathan Hatch would perish at sea, crossing the Atlantic to expand into the New World...something Fanny's husband was pushing. The news of their deaths, her father's and her husband's, sent her into horrible depression, and she fell quite ill. Scrooge visited her every day in the hospital...holding her hand...the only family left in the world. She died on Christmas Day...while giving birth to her son, Frederick (Nephew Fred).

(This is one reason why Scrooge finds Christmas Day especially hateful, and why he also has such dislike for Fred.)

Scrooge's mother, Emily Parker, died from influenza, caught it from Ebenezer, and so his father considered it Ebenezer's fault, so sent him away.

Fanny Scrooge (Little Fan) was seven years old when her mother died, and Scrooge was 10 years old. Fan was raised by one of the maids who refused to leave when Benjamin fired the staff after the death of his wife. She told him she would take care of his daughter, and only wished to have a place to live and food to eat, and in exchange, she would administer to all of their needs. Two years later, Benjamin's heart was softening, especially when he realized that he was falling in love with this housekeeper, named Sarah. It was both Sarah and Fan who asked for young Ebenezer to join the family again. When Fan runs into her brother's arms telling him he is a man now and will not be returning to school, he would be about 12 and she would be about 9.

Fanny gets married when she is 17 (8 years after they go home) She meets her husband at the Fezziwig party when she and Belle are 16. She has a child when she is 19 (and Scrooge is 22) That is when she dies, and the Scrooge/Belle scene is when he is 23 and she is 20. If Fred has two young children, and the oldest is "new Fan" who is 9, then he is about 33. That makes Scrooge 55 years old.

When Fanny gets married, Scrooge is 20, and working at Fezziwig's. It is after Fan's death a few years later that Ebenezer turns so bitter...and that he and Belle split up.

About the Play

When creating this adaptation of such a well-known classic work, I began my research by looking at the original text in its entirety, without concerns for what was possible to perform on stage, with the thought that it would be more accurate to make editing decisions later. First, I separated all known dialogue notated in the book as scripted words. Then I continued by converting any phrases like, “Scrooge said that he would see him—yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first”, into:

Scrooge: Yes, I’ll dine with you all right...never!

After completing the play in that manner, it was time to create dialogue that was formed from larger narrative descriptions, such as talking about children playing, or people gathering and commenting about the season, or about Scrooge. Finally, I found that there were many gaps in the script—many unanswered questions which I wanted to provide my own answers, based on clues in the original script. I decided to form a time-line for all the characters and events, and layer it on top of the original Dickens novel. To make everything very realistic for me, I even gave names and histories to all the characters in the book—even children playing together in the schoolyard.

1750 Benjamin Scrooge is born

1776 Benjamin fights in the Revolutionary War
He is 26, and is a Lieutenant under General Burgoyne

1778 Benjamin returns from the War after being injured at the Battle of Saratoga, and marries Emily Parker.
She is a cousin and is 16 years old at the time.

1779 Scrooge is born
His father, Benjamin, is 29

1782 Fanny is born

1789 Scrooge’s mother dies (she gets the flu from Scrooge while nursing him to health)
Scrooge sent to Boarding School (Scrooge is 10)
Fanny is 7 years old
Benjamin is 39
Benjamin dismisses all of his house staff; but Sarah Danner, a 20 year old maid asks him if she can stay for only her room and board, and in return she will take care of Fanny and see to all the household needs. He agrees.

1791 Scrooge is a ‘man’ at 12 and goes home and is apprenticed to Fezziwig
Fanny is 9 years old.

- Benjamin marries again, to Sarah Danner, the housekeeper who has been raising Fanny. It was Sarah who had softened Benjamin's heart, and she and Fanny had asked that Ebenezer return home, and begin his apprenticeship with Fezziwig.
Benjamin is 41, Sarah is 29
- 1798 [The Romantic Period begins in the Victorian Era]
Fezziwig Party
Scrooge is 19
Fanny is 16
Fezziwig is 55
Benjamin Scrooge is 48, and Sarah Danner Scrooge is 36
- 1799 Fanny is 17 and engaged to the young Lieutenant whom she met at the Fezziwig party.
- 1800 Fanny is 18 and married
- 1801 Scrooge and Fanny's Father, Benjamin, and Fanny's husband Jonathan, are lost at sea while going to the New World. Fanny sinks into serious depression.
Fanny is 19 and gives birth to a child, Frederick, on Christmas Day.
She dies in childbirth
Sarah Danner Scrooge takes the child to her brother's house (Uncle Topper Danner), and she and Fred remain there. Fred's house we see in the show was actually Topper's.
Sarah is 38, and Topper is 43
Scrooge is 22 and now owns everything that was his father's, including the house.
With his newfound wealth, Scrooge resigns from Fezziwigs, takes over his father's seat on the exchange, and begins amassing his fortune. He meets Jacob Marley, who is 29, and they go into partnership
- 1802 Scrooge is 23, and Belle is 20 (the same age Fanny would have been if she lived)
- 1804 Belle marries Dick Wilkins, she is 22 and Dick is 25
- 1806 Belle and Dick have their first child, she is 24 and Dick is 27
- 1812 Fezziwig Dies, he was 69
Dick is 33 and takes over the warehouse
Fred is 11
- 1824 Fred marries Elizabeth
Fred is 23 and Elizabeth is 18
- 1825 Fanny is born to Fred and Elizabeth
- 1827 Belle hears Dick talk about seeing Scrooge sitting alone, she is 45 and Dick is 48
Belle and Dick's children are 21, 18, 16, 13, and 11
Jacob Marley Dies. He was 55 at the time. (*"He died seven years ago this very night"*)

Scrooge is 48

1834 Time of Present (Scrooge is 55)

Belle is 52

Fred is 33, Elizabeth is 28, and Fanny is 9 years old

(If Topper were alive, he would be 76, but he died and left the house to Fred. Women were not allowed to own property, so Sarah was allowed to live there, but not inherit it.)

Sarah Danner Scrooge is 71

With this information, it was easy for me to create additional scenes and dialogue for the play, and stay true to the historical timeline.

I hope you enjoy my adaptation of this timeless classic, and that it has, in the immortal words of Charles Dickens, “not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me.”

Merry Christmas!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Danner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dialogue matched with music for Belle scene at Fezziwig party-

[Dialogue is very slow and with large spaces between responses...it is a dance of words.]

Belle: (0:12) Oh, Ebenezer, let's dance! (*stands and pulls YS hand to follow*)

Y Scrooge: Would you mind, a little later perhaps...there's something I wish to talk about...something.....important.

Belle: (0:24) (*sits back down*) Yes, Ebenezer?

Y Scrooge: (0:29) I finished my apprentice...and...well...father introduced me to Mister Jacob Marley, and he has a place for me at his business...in London.

Belle: But what about Mister Fezziwig?

Y Scrooge: He said it was time for me to make my mark. It has been seven years this very night. (*pause*) Belle...?

Belle: (0:54) Yes, Ebenezer?

Y Scrooge: We have known each other for such a long time, have we not?

Belle: A very long time, to be sure.

Y Scrooge: (1:06) Belle?

Belle: Ebenezer....

Y Scrooge: You and Fan are such good friends with each other...and father likes you...and so does Sarah.... Belle...each time I see you...I...

Belle: (1:27) Yes, Ebenezer? [*live voices transition*]

Y Scrooge: I have something very important to ask you, Belle. (1:38) (*rises, then reaches in his pocket for the ring*) There is nothing so important...nothing that matters more to me... Belle...?

Belle: (1:49) Yes?

Y Scrooge: (*kneels on one knee before her...holds ring in front of her with one hand, while the other holds her hand*) Dearest Belle.....will you marry me?

Belle: (2:01) **Yes!** (*---on the last note of the music*) (*and then in the silence--*) Yes, I will marry you, Ebenezer.

(*Y Scrooge slips ring on her finger, while the Fezziwigs kiss and they all freeze*)