

A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens

Adapted for the American Southwest Theatre Company

By

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Characters

(Other than the role of Scrooge, each actor will play multiple roles)

Ebenezer Scrooge	Ghost of Christmas Future
Young Scrooge	Annabelle (Belle)
Adolescent Scrooge	Older Belle
Narrator 1	Older Belle's Husband
Narrator 2	Mr. Fezziwig
Narrator 3	Mrs. Fezziwig
Narrator 4	Dick Wilkins
Bob Cratchit	Fan
Mrs. Cratchit	Spirit of Ignorance
Cratchit Children (Martha, Belinda, Peter, Sarah, James, Tiny Tim)	Spirit of Want
Scrooge's Nephew, Fred	Rich Man #1
Fred's Wife	Rich Man #2
Fred's Friends (Topper & Cynthia)	Laundress
Marley's Ghost	Undertaker
Ghost of Christmas Past	Charwoman
Ghost of Christmas Present	Boy on Street

PRELUDE

(At the start, we see an empty stage except for perhaps a simple Christmas tree center stage and some benches, chairs, and costume racks around the perimeter. We see a projected sign with the words: The Vauxhall Players of London present “A Ghost Story of Christmas.”

As house goes to half, off-stage, we hear the singing of a Christmas Carol TBD, as one by one actors enter the stage carrying various props and costumes and setting them on the perimeter of the playing area to be used on stage for the performance. The actors wear some type of basic company costume and don additional pieces to change characters throughout the play. One of the actors steps forward to address the audience, as the rest of the cast continues to hum the carol they’d been singing while getting the stage ready. We might also have some actors make sound-effects as this prelude continues to add to the story-telling nature of the performance.

One actor steps downstage to speak directly to the audience. Other actors begin to join.)

ACTOR 1

The Vauxhall Players of London welcomes you to the 175th annual Christmas Eve telling of the most famous ghost story of all time. We like to call it by its original name — “A Ghost Story of Christmas” — but you probably know it as “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens.

ACTOR 2

Back in Victorian England on those dark, cold midwinter nights, folks huddled around fires to share gruesome stories of ghosts and evil spirits and people gone mad.

ACTOR 3

It was actually a Christmas tradition borrowed from our Pagan ancestors. And with Dickens, a host of new Christmas traditions was born that we follow to this day.

ACTOR 4

Without Dickens, we wouldn’t have gift giving at Christmas or caroling.

ACTOR 5

No paid holiday vacations or even “Merry Christmas.”

ACTOR 6

No holiday feasts or Christmas trees.

ACTOR 7

And we wouldn’t have December as a time of generosity and the holiday spirit.

ACTOR 8

But as we say... it all began as a ghost story... in a graveyard... on a fateful Christmas Eve long ago. Join us as we tell you this supernatural tale of greed and redemption... a tale told with the exact words Dickens wrote in 1843.

ACTOR 9

We give you...

FULL COMPANY

A CHRISTMAS CAROL!

(Blackout.)

Scene One.

(The lights come up on Marley's grave as scene one begins. Four black clad mourners face the gravestone.)

NARRATOR 1

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by...

(Narrator 2, as the first mourner, turns to the audience.)

NARRATOR 2

the clergyman,

(Narrator 3, as the second mourner, turns to the audience.)

NARRATOR 3

the clerk,

(Narrator 4, as the third mourner, turns to the audience.)

NARRATOR 4

the undertaker,

NARRATOR 1

and the chief mourner... Scrooge.

NARRATOR 2

Scrooge signed it.

NARRATOR 3

Marley was as dead as a doornail.

NARRATOR 4

And Scrooge knew it for Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years.

NARRATOR 1

There is no doubt that Marley was dead.

NARRATOR 2

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley.

(Scrooge & Marley sign flies in. Two tall desks and stools are set.)

NARRATOR 3

The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley..

NARRATOR 4

Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names — it was all the same to him.

NARRATOR 1

Marley was as dead as a doornail.

NARRATOR 2

There can be no doubt of that Marley was dead.

NARRATOR 3 .

This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of this story.

(Suddenly the lights change, and Scrooge, the fourth mourner, turns around and walks down to his desk as the Company reacts to Scrooge's appearance.)

COMPANY

Oh!

NARRATOR 1

He was a tightfisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge. squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.

NARRATOR 2

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, made his eyes red, and his thin lips blue.

NARRATOR 3

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say:

FRIENDLY PASSER-BY

“My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?”

NARRATOR 4

No beggar implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge.

(Lights start to change to the interior of Scrooge and Marley. Scrooge who has been frozen to this point, comes to life and watches Bob Cratchit as he sits at a desk DL, lighting a small candle and warming his hands.)

NARRATOR 1

Once upon a time...

NARRATOR 2

And of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve,

NARRATOR 3

old Scrooge sat busy in his countinghouse, his eye upon his clerk Bob Cratchit who sat copying letters in a very cold cell beyond.

(The Narrators walk out of the action as Scrooge's nephew, Fred, enters.)

NEPHEW.

A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

NEPHEW

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

SCROOGE

I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

NEPHEW

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

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

NEPHEW

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, and 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!

NEPHEW

Uncle!

SCROOGE

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

NEPHEW

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.

NEPHEW

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 as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in a 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.

(Cratchit applauds wildly as Scrooge shoots him a killing look.)

SCROOGE

Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation, Bob Cratchit.

(Cratchit turns away rubbing his hands from the cold over his candle.)

SCROOGE

You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. It's a wonder you don't run for Parliament.

.NEPHEW

Don't be angry uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow. Come see us.

SCROOGE

I'll see you first in...

NEPHEW

But why? Why?

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

NEPHEW

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

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

NEPHEW

I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. But I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a Merry Christmas, uncle!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

NEPHEW

And a Happy New Year!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

(Nephew turns away from Scrooge and to Bob Cratchit.)

NEPHEW

And a very merry Christmas and a very happy New Year to you and your family, Bob Cratchit.

CRATCHIT

Oh thank you sir, and the same warm wishes to you.

(Fred has exited, being shown out by Cratchit. Scrooge has looked up and off after they disappear.)

SCROOGE

There's another fellow my clerk, with fifteen shilling a week, and a wife and family, talking about a Merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam!

(Cratchit returns from showing Fred out being followed by two businessmen.)

CRATCHIT

Sir!

SCROOGE.

What is it? *(He sees the men.)* Oh...

MAN 1

Scrooge and Marley's I believe.

SCROOGE

Yes.

MAN 1

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

SCROOGE

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

MAN 2

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

SCROOGE

Liberality.

MAN 1

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?

MAN 1

Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE

And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

MAN 1

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

SCROOGE

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

MAN 2

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.

MAN 2

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.

MAN 1

You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE

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

MAN 1

Many can't go there.

MAN 2

And many would rather die.

SCROOGE

If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population. Good afternoon, gentlemen!

MAN 1

Good afternoon.

MAN 2

Good afternoon.

SCROOGE

Slight provision for the poor and destitute! *(Scrooge snickers to himself.)*

(Cratchit shows the men out. A child has strolled onstage and is singing.)

CHILD

God rest you merry, gentlemen.

May nothing you dismay.

Remember Christ our Savior

Was born on Christmas day...

(Scrooge glares at the child, locks eyes with him, and brandishes a ruler threatening from his desk, frightening him away. Slowly Scrooge crosses back down into the room, feeling very satisfied with himself.)

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

(Scrooge starts back to his desk as a cry of ghostly pain echoes round the room. This sound is accompanied by bells, whistles, sighs, and moans from the company.)

MARLEY

Scrooooooooooooooge!

(Scrooge starts back to see where the sound came from, dismisses it and goes back to his desk.)

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

(Cratchit returns from letting the men out as the clock strikes six. Scrooge closes his books as Cratchit hurriedly dons his muffler and gloves, puts his books away and blows his candle out.)

CRATCHIT

Good night, sir.

SCROOGE

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 you 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

It's only once a year, sir.

SCROOGE

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

CRATCHIT

Yes sir. Thank you, sir. Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge!

(Cratchit has exited on this final line.)

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

(The lights fade on Scene One.)

Scene Two

(In the darkness we hear a single voice singing as the members of the Company strike the elements of Scrooge's office and set up his bedroom. There is a bed and a couple of small chairs with a side table and an open frame of a fireplace.

The Narrators begin to speak. The lights rise on the Narrators and on Scrooge. He has not moved from his old position but is now in his room.)

NARRATOR 1

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, went home to bed.

NARRATOR 2

He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner Jacob Marley.

NARRATOR 3

They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of a building up a courtyard, 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.

NARRATOR 4

It was dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices.

(The carol comes to a halt. Scrooge has crossed to the table during the previous speech and has just lit a match for a candle when again the ghostly cry is heard.)

MARLEY

Scroooooooge!

(Scrooge looks up and surveys the room from where he is standing. Satisfied that all is well, he talks to himself.)

SCROOGE

Scrooge is not a man to be frightened by echoes. Nobody under the table, nobody under the chair; a fire in the grate; a little saucepan of gruel; nobody under the bed; nobody in my dressing gown.

(Scrooge having lighted the candle previously now takes his nightcap down and puts it on. He goes to the fire and pokes at it — it begins to flare as we hear again.)

MARLEY

Scroooooooge!

(Scrooge backs away from the fire. He makes several turns around the room finally returning to the fire.)

SCROOGE

Bah! Humbug!

(Now the company provides the ghostly sounds. Scrooge returns to the fire and sits down with resolution. As he does a disused bell hanging in the room begins to swing scarcely making a sound at first but soon ringing out loudly as does every bell about the stage. Scrooge covers his ears. Suddenly the bells stop.

There is a pause in which Scrooge removes his hands from his ears.

Next a clanking noise deep down below begins. A cellar door bangs open and the noise becomes much louder. Heavy chains are heard coming up the stairs towards his room — over the top of this noise Scrooge has made his way to the bedpost to hang on.)

SCROOGE

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

(The door flies open and there is Marley's Ghost.)

SCROOGE

I know him! Marley's Ghost!

(Scrooge tries to recover some of his wits as the Ghost makes its slow progress into the room. When he has arrived and is looking at Scrooge, Scrooge attempts to speak.)

SCROOGE

How now! What do you want with me?

MARLEY

Much.

SCROOGE

(Aside) Marley's voice, no doubt about it! *(To the Ghost)* Who are you?

MARLEY

Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE

Who were you then?

MARLEY

In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE

Can you, can you sit down?

MARLEY

I can.

SCROOGE

Do it then.

(The Ghost and Scrooge sit.)

MARLEY

You don't believe in me.

SCROOGE

I don't.

MARLEY

Why do you doubt your senses?.

SCROOGE

Because little things affect 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.

(Scrooge laughs humorlessly at his own joke then falls silent. The Ghost raises a frightful cry and shakes his chains. Scrooge falls to his knees.)

SCROOGE

Dreadful apparition, 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 fellowmen, and travel far and wide; and if that Spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world —oh, woe is me! And witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!

(The Ghost raises another frightful cry and shakes his chains.)

SCROOGE

You are chained. Tell me why?

MARLEY

I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it, link by link, and of my own free will I wore it. *(Scrooge trembles more and more.)* 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

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

MARLEY

I have none to give. Mark me! In life, my Spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole. I never knew that any earthly Spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Yet Oh! Such was I! I cannot rest. I cannot stay. I cannot linger anywhere.

SCROOGE

Seven years dead. And travelling all the time?

MARLEY

The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

SCROOGE

You travel fast?

MARLEY

On the wings of the wind.

SCROOGE

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

(Ghost sets up another cry and clanks his chain.)

MARLEY

Oh! Captive, bound and double-ironed, I never knew that no space of regret can make amends for one's life's opportunity misused!!

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!

(Ghost holds up his chain at arm's length and flings it heavily to the floor again.)

At this time of the year, I suffer the 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?

(Scrooge begins to shake even more.)

Hear me! My time is nearly gone!

SCROOGE

I will. But don't be hard upon me. Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!

MARLEY

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. Thank'ee!

MARLEY

You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

SCROOGE

Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

MARLEY

It is.

SCROOGE

I...I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY

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

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!

(The Ghost backs away and a gradual moaning sound builds in the air by the company.)

NARRATOR 1

Marley beckoned Scrooge to approach the window, which he did.

(Scrooge has followed the Ghost upstage and stands in awe for a moment. The moaning builds.)

NARRATOR 2

He became sensible of confused noises in the air; the ghost, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

(The Ghost disappears, and Scrooge cranes out window to see where he goes.)

NARRATOR 3

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives.

NARRATOR 4

(The moaning has turned into a dissonant musical chord which is held.)

The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power forever.

(He then goes to examine the door that the Ghost first came through. He looks at the disused bell and the fire.

The musical chord crescendos and cuts off. Scrooge starts to utter something but can only get out the first syllable.)

SCROOGE

Hum

(Scrooge goes straight to the bed and throws himself in it. Carefully and tightly he draws the curtains around him as the Narrator steps into speak.)

NARRATOR 1

And being from the emotion he had undergone,

NARRATOR 2

or the fatigue of the day,

NARRATOR 3

or his glimpse of the Invisible World,

NARRATOR 4

or the lateness of the house,

ALL 4 NARRATORS

much in need of repose, Scrooge went straight to bed, and fell asleep upon the instant.

(The company quietly sings a snippet of a Christmas Carol TBD and fades out as a deep and sonorous snore comes from behind the curtains. The fade out on Scene Two.)

Scene Three

(Suddenly, in the dark, chimes begin the four quarter hours. Lights rise on the scene as Scrooge's head appears from behind the curtains.)

NARRATOR 1

When Scrooge awoke, the chimes of a neighboring church struck the four quarters, so he listened for the hour. To his great astonishment, the heavy bell went on up to twelve, then stopped.

(The clock begins to strike twelve.)

SCROOGE

Twelve! Twelve! It was past two when I went to bed. Twelve! Midnight? Why it isn't possible that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun and this is twelve at noon!

(Scrooge rises from bed and finds his way to the imaginary window upstage.)

NARRATOR 2

The idea being an alarming one, Scrooge scrambled out of bed and groped his way to the window.

NARRATOR 3

Scrooge thought, and thought, and thought it over and over and over and could make nothing of it. He lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed.

SCROOGE

Was it a dream or not?

(The chimes start to toll four quarters again.)

SCROOGE

A quarter past! Half Past! A quarter to it. The hour itself and nothing else!

(The clock tolls one, lights flash in the room, the bed curtains are pulled back, explosions go off, the room disappears.)

NARRATOR 4

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand and Scrooge found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them.

SCROOGE

Are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

I am!

SCROOGE

Who, and what are you?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE

Long past?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

No. Your past.

SCROOGE

What business brings you here?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Your welfare.

SCROOGE

I am much obliged, but a night of unbroken rest would be more conducive to that end.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

To your reclamation then. Take heed!

(Spirit puts out its hand to Scrooge.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Rise! And walk with me!

SCROOGE

But the weather and the hour are not adapted to pedestrian purposes; and I am clad but lightly in my slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Walk with me!

(He rose but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, he clasped its robe in supplication.)

SCROOGE

I am mortal and liable to fall.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Bear but a touch of my hand there, within your heart (*pointing at Scrooge's heart*), and you shall be upheld in more than this.

(Scrooge slowly rises and touches the Spirit's hand. With this touch the lights go to a very specific light to illuminate the new scene. Noises of rushing wind and garbled sound rush by. As the lights reach full, the noise ceases.)

SCROOGE

Good heavens! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here. Oh Spirit, I had long forgotten this place. So many thoughts, and hopes, and joys and cares... long, long forgotten.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

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

(Scrooge wiping a tear off his cheek.)

SCROOGE

Nothing. A pimple. I pray ye Ghost, lead me where you would.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

You recollect the way?

SCROOGE

Remember it? I could walk it blindfold.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Strange to have forgotten it for so many years.

SCROOGE

I remember every gate, and every post and every tree. And see there in the distance the town, with its bridge, its church and the river Oh! the winding river...

(Suddenly the noise of horse's hooves and boys' voices are heard in the distance.)

SCROOGE

Jack, Ned, Perkins... I know those boys ! Halloooo!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

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

SCROOGE

But I know them. I know them.

(The boys are heard wishing each other a Merry Christmas as they go off singing.)

BOYS

A Christmas Carol TBD, for example:

Here we come awassailing Among the leave so green,

Here we come a wandering, So fair to be seen:

Love and joy come to you, And to you your wassail too, And God bless you; and
send you a happy New Year , And God send you A happy New Year.

SCROOGE

(As they start to sing) Merry Christmas! (He sings with them for a moment and then says to himself.) Merry Christmas! (A painful memory.) What's a Merry Christmas to me? What good has it ever been to me?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

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

(The boys have sung more and more quietly. The singing has now totally stopped. The Young Scrooge appears at a desk with a book - reading.)

SCROOGE

Poor boy. *(The Christmas Carol sung by the boys is just now fading away)* Poor boy. I wish... but it's too late now.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

What's 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.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

(Thoughtfully) Let's see another Christmas.

(Lights change as an adolescent Scrooge appears at the same desk as the younger Scrooge. He takes the book that the younger Scrooge was reading and flings it away. Fan enters.)

FAN

Dear, dear brother!

SCROOGE

Fan!

ADOLESCENT SCROOGE

Fan!

FAN

I have come to bring you home, dear brother. To bring you home.

ADOLESCENT SCROOGE

Home?

(Scrooge has approached the scene and speaks as though he were there.)

SCROOGE

Home, little Fan?

FAN

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

ADOLESCENT SCROOGE

Oh, Fan!

SCROOGE

My dearest, dearest sister!

(Fan claps her hands, tries to kiss the Adolescent Scrooge but is too short — grabs his hands and starts pulling him to the door and they disappear as she says:)

FAN

Can you believe it dear brother? O my dear, dear brother home at last. Come, come on.

(Scrooge and the Spirit have watched their exit.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. But she had a large heart.

SCROOGE

So she had, you 're right. I'll not gainsay it Spirit. God forbid!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

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

SCROOGE

One child.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

True. Your nephew.

SCROOGE

(Uneasy) Yes. Yes.

(The Spirit again waves his hand and as the lights change they change location. Scrooge looks up out of his reverie.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Does this old warehouse door look familiar? Do you know it?

SCROOGE

Know it? Why I apprenticed here! *(Fezziwig enters.)* Why it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!

FEZZIWIG

Yo ho there! Ebenezer! Ebenezer Scrooge!

(As Ebenezer runs on, Scrooge runs into the scene as well.)

EBENEZER

Yes Mr. Fezziwig, Sir?

SCROOGE

Yes Mr. Fezziwig, Sir!

FEZZIWIG

Dick! Dick Wilkins!

(Dick Wilkins runs into the scene.)

DICK

Yes, Mr. Fezziwig, Sir!

SCROOGE

Why it's Dick. 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 garlands up before a man can say, Jack Robinson!

(The boys run off and other members of the company become guests arriving at Fezziwig's Christmas party - chatting, laughing, playing etc.)

SCROOGE

That's right. You wouldn't believe how we two went at it.

FEZZIWIG

Hillo—ho! Clear away, my lads and let's have lots of room here!

SCROOGE

Clear away! There was nothing we wouldn't or couldn't have cleared away with old Fezziwig looking on. The floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire, the warehouse was snug, and warm, and dry and as bright as a ballroom you would desire to see upon a winter's night. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable.

(During the above Fezziwig has greeted his guests with Mrs. Fezziwig and a general good time is had by all. Finally, Fezziwig turns to his wife to begin the dance.)

FEZZIWIG

Mrs. Fezziwig?

MRS FEZZIWIG

Mr. Fezziwig!

(The dance begins with each of the cast having a hand rhythm instrument — bells, woodblock, tambourine etc. They sing as they dance.)

COMPANY

A musical number/dance TBD.

For example:

Here we come awassailing among the leaves so green

Here we come a wandering, So fair to be seen

God bless the master of this house, Like—wise the mistress too; And all the little children That round the table go: Love and joy, etc.

(People have soloed during what is both a song fest and a dance. All is enjoyed by all. Fezziwig is animated and joyous at everyone's endeavors. Dick and Ebenezer are near Fezziwig in proximity and spirit. Scrooge has entered into the dancing — pointed, giggled, laughed and had a wonderful time. The lights fade to an area on the Spirit and Scrooge as the guests start to say their goodbyes to the Fezziwigs.)

SCROOGE

Dear, dear, dear old Fezziwig.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

A small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude. He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money.

SCROOGE

It isn't that. It isn't that, Spirit. He had the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gave was quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

(Scrooge feels the Spirit's glance and stops.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

What is the matter?

SCROOGE

Nothing particular.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Something I think?

SCROOGE

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

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

My time grows short. Quick!

(The lights change again, and we are looking at Ebenezer as a young man of business and a fair young girl. Scrooge suddenly sees them.)

SCROOGE

Good heavens, Belle! Anabelle... Oh Spirit...

EBENEZER

Anabelle.

ANABELLE

It matters little to you, very little, Ebenezer. 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.

EBENEZER

What Idol has displaced you?

SCROOGE

(Remembering) A golden one.

ANABELLE

A golden one.

SCROOGE

(Remembering) Oh, Belle.

EBENEZER

This then 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.

ANABELLE

You fear the world too much. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master—passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?

EBENEZER

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

(Anabelle shakes her head as does Scrooge.)

EBENEZER

Am I?

ANABELLE

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.

EBENEZER

(Impatiently) I was a boy. Now I am a man.

SCROOGE

You're a fool!

ANABELLE

Your own feelings tell you that you are not what you were. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. I release you.

EBENEZER

Have I ever sought release?

ANABELLE

In words. No. Never.

EBENEZER

In what then?

ANABELLE

In a changed nature; in an altered spirit. I would gladly think otherwise if I could. Heaven knows! *(He is about to speak but she continues.)* If you were free today to seek me out and try to win me now, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl — you who 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 repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

(They stare at each other for a long moment. Scrooge is staring down on Ebenezer.)

SCROOGE

Say something! Speak to her!

ANABELLE

May you be happy in the life you have chosen!

(Anabelle walks away from Ebenezer. Ebenezer takes one step to follow her and pauses. He walks in the other direction. Scrooge follows him a bit.)

SCROOGE

You fool! You fool! *(To the Spirit)* Spirit! Show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

One shadow more.

SCROOGE

No more! No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more. *(He turns to Anabelle who is still where Ebenezer has left here.)* Oh, Belle, Belle, I'm so sorry.

(From the other side of the stage another older Anabelle enters with her husband.

OLDER BELLE

Margaret!

(Anabelle now becomes Margaret, Anabelle's daughter, and crosses past Scrooge to her mother and father.)

MARGARET

Yes, mother?

OLDER BELLE

My darling daughter. All the other children are asleep. Don't you think it's time to dream of tomorrow's Merry Christmas?

MARGARET

Shall I dream it a kind and beautiful Christmas?

OLDER BELLE.

Yes, dear. Dream it as beautiful as you may.

MARGARET

Yes, mother. Good night mother. Goodnight father.

HUSBAND

Goodnight, Margaret.

(Margaret exits. Her husband is lighting his pipe.)

HUSBAND

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

OLDER BELLE

Who was it?

HUSBAND

Mr. Scrooge. 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.

(Older Belle stares off in the distance, touched by this story for a moment and then reaches for the comfort of her husband. They hold each other as the light fades on them. Scrooge turns to the Spirit.)

SCROOGE

Spirit! Remove me from this place.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

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

. SCROOGE

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

(Scrooge, in a fury, attacks the Spirit and it explodes and vanishes as in the distance a minor version of the earlier carol is heard.)

VOICES

Love and joy come to you, And to you your wassail too (Song TBD)

(Scrooge pauses for a very long moment as, very slowly the lights come up on his bed. As Scrooge crosses slowly to the bed, gets in and draws the curtains, the company draws in around him watching this action.)

NARRATOR 1

Scrooge was conscious of being exhausted,

NARRATOR 2

and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness;

NARRATOR 3

and, further, of being in his own bedroom.

NARRATOR 4

He barely had time to reel to bed

ALL 4 NARRATORS

before he sank into a heavy sleep.

(The carol concludes a few beats after. There is a moment of silence as the cast looks at Scrooge asleep and the lights fade to black.)

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Scene Four

(The company reassembles singing another carol. They have attended to the needs of the second act prop and costume wise as the lights are fading out.)

COMPANY

Silent night, Holy night
All is calm, All is bright
(Or some other carol TDB)

(The lights have been at black for the last line of the song. There has been strong and committed snoring from behind the bed curtains. Suddenly there is a loud snort as Scrooge pokes his head through the curtains and the lights come up.)

NARRATOR 1

Scrooge felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger dispatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention.

(Scrooge looks about the bed in search of the Ghost to come.)

NARRATOR 2

Scrooge wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance and did not wish to be taken by surprise and made nervous. He was ready for anything in a good broad field of strange appearances, and nothing between a baby and a rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

(The clock strikes one.)

NARRATOR 3

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. No shape appeared.

NARRATOR 4

Except for a blaze of ruddy light which fell upon the center of the room. The source and secret of the ghostly light seemed to be from the adjoining room.

(The light is from upstage center. Scrooge slowly gets up and approached the door. When he is upon it we hear from without.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Come in! Come in and know me better man!

(Scrooge makes as if to open a door. The curtain parts on a large Christmas tree, the Spirit of Christmas Present, and an elaborate cornucopia of gifts. The stage brightens with light.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me!

(Scrooge who has been overwhelmed by the sight up to this point slowly faces the Spirit.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

You have never seen the like of me before!

SCROOGE

Never.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

You 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?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

More than eighteen hundred.

SCROOGE

A tremendous family to provide for. 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 anything to teach me, let me profit by it.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Touch my robe!

(As Scrooge does so, the room disappears around them leaving them in a down light only. Simultaneously the joyous sounds of Christmas morning church bells begin to ring out. Then the sounds of people start to rise out of the church bells. The lights rise around Scrooge and the Spirit revealing a crowded street on Christmas morning.

During all this Scrooge has watched intently as the Spirit has sprinkled incense on baskets and parcels alike as they pass. Usually, it is the poorer folk that the Spirit has sprinkled.)

SCROOGE

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

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

There is. My own.

SCROOGE

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

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

To a poor one most.

SCROOGE

Why to a poor one most?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Because it needs it most.

NARRATOR 1

Scrooge and the Spirit went on, invisible, into the suburbs of the town and straight to Scrooge's clerk's house.

(With a wave of this hand the Spirit changes the lighting as Cratchit, Belinda, Peter, Sarah, and James Cratchit enter. They, with the help of other Company members, set up a table and chairs and Christmas dinner utensils, bowls, plates, napkins etc.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

Are the potatoes bubbling, Peter?

PETER

Yes, mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Belinda, Peter, help me spread the cloth — everything must be fine for Christmas.

SARAH & JAMES

We 've smelt the goose all the way from the baker's shop and knew it for ours!

PETER

I'll warrant it's ever so fine and dressed with sage and onion.

SARAH & JAMES

Oh, it is!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Now children, help Peter with the table

BELINDA

Sarah, James, help with the silver.

(As they all set to work at the table, the Spirit sprinkles the table and the house.)

SCROOGE

Bob Cratchit's dwelling, Spirit? Think of that. Bob with but fifteen shillings a week himself and hardly pence for the collection plate... and the Spirit of Christmas Present...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Blesses his four-roomed house! Yes!

(Scrooge and the Spirit turn back into the scene.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother Tiny Tim; and Martha wasn't as late last Christmas Day!

(Martha appears.)

MARTHA

Here's Martha, mother!

SARAH & JAMES

Here's Martha, mother!

(All stream to meet her and kiss her and take her bonnet. They come back into the table area.)

CHILDREN

Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha. Wait til you see!

MARTHA

Sarah, Belinda - what ruffles, and James... a collar.

BELINDA

You look so grown up.

JAMES

Merry Christmas, Martha.

MARTHA

Merry Christmas!

(All of these last lines have tumbled together.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

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

MARTHA

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

MRS. CRATCHIT

Well! Never mind so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!

SARAH & JAMES

No, no! There's father coming. Hide Martha, hide!

(Martha hides behind the table as all the other Children and Mrs. Cratchit line up to wish him a merry Christmas — Cratchit enters with Tiny Tim.)

CRATCHIT

Here we are, Tim!

ALL

Merry Christmas, father!

CRATCHIT

And a Merry Christmas to you too! Why, where's our Martha?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Not coming!

CRATCHIT

Not coming! *(He deflates)* Not coming upon Christmas Day!

(Martha can't bear to see him unhappy and reveals herself. There are general giggles etc.)

MARTHA

Here I am, Father

CRATCHIT

Ah, there she is, my young woman, Martha. Merry Christmas, my dear.

MARTHA

Merry Christmas, Father!

CRATCHIT

Come Tim, off to the washhouse with you.

CHILDREN

Come on Tim!

(The children are off with Tim to the washhouse.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

And how did little Tim behave?

CRATCHIT

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. *(His voice is trembling)* Our Tiny Tim is growing so strong and hearty.

(There is a pause broken by Tim and the Children's reentrance. Peter enters with the goose. Belinda brings the potatoes, Martha with other

*goodies. There is general hubbub at the table as everyone gets set.
Then Cratchit stands and the noise abates.)*

CRATCHIT

Let us pray. *(They all bow their heads.)* Dear Lord, for these bountiful gifts and for the gifts of family and brotherhood we are most thankful on this your holiest of days. Amen.

ALL

Amen.

(The family digs into dinner. Narrators come into view and watch the eating pantomime along with the Spirit and Scrooge.)

NARRATOR 1

There was never such a goose. Its tenderness and flavor, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration.

NARRATOR 2

And eked out by applesauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family.

NARRATOR 3

Indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit spied one small atom of a bone upon the dish...

MRS. CRATCHIT

We hadn't ate it all at last!

NARRATOR 4

And yet everyone had had enough.

ALL

Ahh!

NARRATOR 1

And oh, the pudding!

ALL

Ohh!

NARRATOR 2

Oh yes, the pudding.

(The lights have come back up on a family of entirely full Cratchits.)

CRATCHIT

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

TINY TIM

God bless us every one!

SCROOGE

How frail he is!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

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.

(Scrooge hangs his head at the Spirit's rebuke.)

CRATCHIT

God bless us, indeed. *(There is a moment that the family spends in silence.)* Mr. Scrooge, I 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'm 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, 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.

CRATCHIT

Scrooge!

CHILDREN

Scrooge!

TINY TIM

Scrooge!

(The lights go to black on this scene. The Spirit and Scrooge are oddly lighted in cross light suggesting a limbo effect.)

SCROOGE

Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS 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, no. Oh, no, kind Spirit.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

(Scrooge hangs his head, overcome with penitence and grief.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Hold my robe!

SCROOGE

Where speed we, Spirit? What bleak moor is this?

(Through the next sequence a Christmas Carol TBD might be sung as the Spirit and Scrooge visit each the Miners, the Lighthouse, and the Ship at Sea, At the end of this sequence it has been completely and very softly sung — perhaps hummed in part or completely.)

COMPANY *(Singing Softly as Underscore)*

For example “We wish you a merry Christmas, etc.”

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

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

SCROOGE

Yes, Spirit!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Hold my robe!

SCROOGE

Where speed we now? Above the moor? But whither? Not to sea? To sea.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Even upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks which waters chafe and dash the wild year through.

SCROOGE

A lighthouse.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

A solitary lighthouse, great heaps of seaweed clinging to its base, and storm birds — born of the wind as the seaweed of the water. Even here they know me. Hear ye?

(The singing has increased)

SCROOGE

Yes, Spirit, yes.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Hold my robe.

SCROOGE

Yes, Spirit. *(He does so.)* But where to now?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

On, on above the black and heaving sea. On, far away from any shore.

SCROOGE

A ship. I see a ship!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

A ship. The helmsman at the wheel, the lookout in the bow, the officer at watch, and every man aboard know me. Hear ye!

(The singing increases even more, especially from the members of the company appearing as sailors.)

SCROOGE

Yes, Spirit!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Every man on board, waking or sleeping, has a kinder word for another on this day than on any day in the year, hums a Christmas tune, remembers those he cares for at a distance, and speaks below his breath to his companion of some bygone Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging to it.

(The Carol has come to an end here and is replaced by the sound of low moaning wind.)

SCROOGE

I am amazed.

(A familiar laugh breaks through the darkness, replacing the moaning of the wind.)

SCROOGE

My nephew!?

(More laughter and the lights come up on his nephew Fred, his wife Charlotte, his business associate Topper and his wife's sister Cynthia after Christmas dinner.)

NEPHEW

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

CHARLOTTE

The more shame for him, Fred.

NEPHEW

He's a comical old fellow. that's the truth; and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offenses carry their own punishment, and I am sorry for him.

CHARLOTTE

I have no patience with him.

NEPHEW

Oh, I have! 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?

CHARLOTTE

I think he loses a very good dinner.

TOPPER

Well, as I am but a bachelor and therefore a wretched outcast —I have no right to express an opinion on the subject. *(To Cynthia, at whom he has been making eyes.)* Have I, Miss Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

(Whacking him with her fan.) Oh, Mr. Topper!

(They all laugh.)

TOPPER

He also loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm.

NEPHEW

I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not. And I think I shook him yesterday.

(They all laugh at his "shaking" Scrooge.)

CHARLOTTE

Oh, Fred, really. Let's sing a song for the season!

NEPHEW

Come, come a game! Let's be merry!

CYNTHIA

Song first, then a game!

ALL

Oh, let's. Yes!

(Led by CHARLOTTE, they sing a Carol TBD in multi-part harmony. As the song ends, CYNTHIA shows off by holding the final high note long past everyone else. Topper kisses her quickly on the cheek to stop her.)

CYNTHIA

(With mock outrage.) Oh, no! Mr. Topper, you really are a scoundrel.

(They all laugh together.)

TOPPER

And this scoundrel shall have his prize.

NEPHEW

(As Charlotte applauds.) Hear! Hear!

CYNTHIA

Oh, no.

(Topper steals another chaste kiss.)

NEPHEW

Bravo! Bravo!

SCROOGE

(Who has been caught up in the merriment) Bravo! Kiss her again!

NEPHEW

I think we better play our game now before Topper finds the mistletoe!

CHARLOTTE

Oh yes!

CYNTHIA

Yes, oh please. What shall we play?

TOPPER

How about "Yes and No?"

NEPHEW

Excellent choice.

CYNTHIA

Very good.

CHARLOTTE

I love that game!

SCROOGE

Oh, good! Another game!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

We must not stay!

SCROOGE

But let's stay for the game. One half hour Spirit — just that, please.

TOPPER

Fred shall be it. He has to think of something and we must find out what — he only answering our questions yes and no as the case may be. Understood?

CYNTHIA and CHARLOTTE

Yes!

SCROOGE

Yes!

TOPPER

All right, Fred?

NEPHEW

Got it! What am I thinking of?

CHARLOTTE

Is it vegetable?

TOPPER

Animal?

NEPHEW

Yes.

CYNTHIA

A live animal?

NEPHEW

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

In England?

NEPHEW

Yes.

TOPPER

In London?

NEPHEW

Yes.

CYNTHIA

Is it tame?

NEPHEW

Hardly.

SCROOGE

Does it live in the zoo?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Ssssh!

TOPPER

Does it live in the zoo?

NEPHEW

No.

CHARLOTTE

But it's a wild beast?

NEPHEW

Yes.

TOPPER

Does it growl?

NEPHEW

Oh, yes.

CYNTHIA

Does it bite?

NEPHEW

Oh, yes.

CYNTHIA

It's a horse.

TOPPER

Horses don't growl.

CYNTHIA

Oh, sorry.

CHARLOTTE

(Thinking out loud.) A wild beast that growls and bites and doesn't live in the zoo...

TOPPER

That's loose on the streets of London.

CHARLOTTE

A dog?

No. NEPHEW

A cat? TOPPER

No. NEPHEW

A swine? CHARLOTTE

No. NEPHEW

A bear? TOPPER

No!!! *(He stamps around the room laughing uproariously.)* NEPHEW

Has it been here a long time? SCROOGE

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Ssssh! CHARLOTTE

Has it been here a long time? NEPHEW

Yes. CHARLOTTE

Wait a minute... Is it old? NEPHEW

Yes. CHARLOTTE

Is it ugly? NEPHEW

Yes, poor thing, it is. CHARLOTTE

Is it wealthy?

CYNTHIA

Wealthy?

NEPHEW

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

And does it go about London eating up the poor?

NEPHEW

Famous for it.

CHARLOTTE

Then I know. I've found it out.

NEPHEW

Yes?

SCROOGE

Tell us! Tell us!

CHARLOTTE

It's Mister Scrooge!

NEPHEW

So it is!

(They all laugh but Scrooge who is crestfallen and moves away from the action to the Spirit.)

NEPHEW

And for that Uncle Scrooge has given us such a source of merriment, it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. *(Passing the wine about.)* Here, a glass of holiday cheer and I say "To Uncle Scrooge!"

ALL

(Amidst much laughter.) To Uncle Scrooge!

(The lights fade on the scene leaving Scrooge and the Spirit in the darkened stage. Scrooge had lifted his arm in an imaginary return of toast to his Nephew. There is a momentary pause.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

It is close to my time.

SCROOGE

Are Spirit's lives so short?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

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

SCROOGE

Tonight!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

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

(The Company begins to make the low sound of wind in the distance.)

SCROOGE

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

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

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

(From the foldings of its robe come two children, wretched and abject, who cling to his robe and kneel at its feet. The wind increases.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

O man! Look here! Look, look, down here!

SCROOGE

Spirit! Are they yours?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

They are Man's. Beware them both but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want.

SCROOGE

Have they no refuge or resource?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

(Scrooge turns front at the sound of his own words as the clock begins to toll twelve. The lights fade on the Spirit and the two children leaving Scrooge alone onstage awaiting the next Phantom whose coming was foretold to him.)

Scene Five.

(As the lights change a hooded, oversized and final Spirit is revealed and approaches Scrooge. When it nears him he falls to his knees. During this a moaning wind has built under the chiming bell and remains after the bell has finished. Finally Scrooge looks up at the Spirit and it stretches out its draped hand pointing onward.)

SCROOGE

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

(The Spirit does not speak but points onward.)

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?

(The Spirit inclines its head.)

SCROOGE

Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any Specter I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me? *(The Spirit gives him no reply but continues to point onward.)* Lead on! Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit!

(The sounds of a day's business — horses hooves, people walking and talking, bells jingling — rise as the lights come up to reveal a busy street. The Spirit and Scrooge advance toward a knot of businessmen.)

BUSINESSMAN 1

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

BUSINESSMAN 2

When did he die?

BUSINESSMAN 1

Last night, I believe.

BUSINESSMAN 3

Why, what was the matter with him? *(Taking snuff)* I thought he'd never die.

BUSINESSMAN 1

(Yawning) God knows.

BUSINESSMAN 2

What has he done with his money?

BUSINESSMAN 1

I haven't heard. *(He yawns again.)* Left it to his Company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know. *(There is a general 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?

BUSINESSMAN 3

I don't mind going if lunch is provided. But I must be fed, if I make one. *(There is another laugh.)*

BUSINESSMAN 1

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. Bye, bye!

(The group breaks up and wanders off in several directions Scrooge looks to the Spirit for explanation.)

SCROOGE

I know those men, Spirit, but I don't understand

(The Spirit points his attention in another direction where two wealthy men are conversing.)

RICH MAN 1

How are you?

RICH MAN 2

How are you?

RICH MAN 1

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

RICH MAN 2

So I am told. Cold, isn't it?

RICH MAN 1

Seasonable for Christmas time.

RICH MAN 2

Good morning.

RICH MAN 1

Good morning.

(They part and walk away from each other. Again, Scrooge turns to the Spirit.)

SCROOGE

Not another word. I am inclined to be surprised that you should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial. But of whom could they be speaking? Not Jacob Marley, for your province, Spirit,

is of the Future. But I will assure myself that they must have some hidden meaning some latent moral for my improvement.

(The Spirit points again, this time to a man with a small book apparently doing business.)

SCROOGE

But that's my accustomed corner, my place of business. And the clock points to my usual time of day for being there. I am but a little surprised. For indeed through these spectral events I have been revolving in my mind a change of life, and I had hoped see my new born resolutions are carried out in this.

(He turns once again to the Spirit who points again. Lights change to a much lower murkier tone. Fog floods the stage along with Old Joe, the keeper of the beetling shop, a Charwoman, a Laundress, and an Undertaker's Man. Surprised at finding each other in this place, and knowing why each other is there, they break out in laughter.)

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. *(She knocks on an imaginary door as Old Joe steps into the action.)* 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. *(Removes his pipe from his mouth.)* Come into the parlor, my dears.

(They walk down stage out of the dark into a lighter part of the stage which is the parlor. The Charwoman defiantly throws her belongings on the floor in front of the assemblage first.)

CHARWOMAN

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

LAUNDRESS

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

CHARWOMAN

Why then, don't stand staring as if you was afraid, woman. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose.

LAUNDRESS

No indeed. *(She laughs.)*

CHARWOMAN

If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, 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. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it.

LAUNDRESS

No, no by the light, I shall be first.

UNDERTAKER

Ladies, ladies please. I shall be first to save the sense of expectation.

(Undertaker gives his bundle to Joe.)

OLD JOE

A pencil case, some sleeve—buttons, and a brooch

CHARWOMAN

That's all.

UNDERTAKER

That's all.

OLD JOE

That's your money. *(Giving him some money)* and I wouldn't give another sixpence if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who's next.

LAUNDRESS

Here.

OLD JOE

Let's see here. Sheets, towels, a pair o' socks, a pair o' teaspoons.

LAUNDRESS

Silver.

OLD JOE

Silver. sugar tongs, and a pair of boots. *(A pause as he totes up her booty.)* I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way to ruin myself. That's your money. *(He gives her money.)*

CHARWOMAN

(Anxious) And now undo my bundle, Joe.

OLD JOE

(Doing so.) What do you call this? Bed-curtains?

CHARWOMAN

Ah! *(She laughs.)* Bed-curtains!!

OLD JOE

You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?

CHARWOMAN

Yes, I do. Why not?

OLD JOE

You were born to make your fortune and you'll certainly do it.

OLD JOE

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

CHARWOMAN

Don't you be afraid of that. You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

OLD JOE

What do you call wasting of it?

CHARWOMAN

Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure. Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. *(She laughs again.)* You see? He frightened everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!

(The scene fades away with the laughter of the four grave robbers as Scrooge turns in horror to the Spirit.)

SCROOGE

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

(The lights have come up on an uncurtained bed with something on it covered up with a ragged sheet. This new sight takes Scrooge by surprise.)

SCROOGE

Merciful Heaven, what is this?

(The Spirit points to the head of the corpse, Scrooge advances on it but cannot draw back the sheet.)

SCROOGE

Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death. Death has set his altar here and dressed it with such terrors as are at his command. This is his dominion! If this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly! Lying in a dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child to say that he was kind to me in this or that *(Scrooge shakes himself from his nightmare.)* Oh Spirit, this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go! *(The Spirit still points to the head.)*

SCROOGE

I understand you and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power.

(Scrooge goes to his knees before the Spirit.)

SCROOGE

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

(The bed disappears in lights as another part of the stage lightens revealing a young woman pacing the floor. There is a knock at the door and her young husband enters.)

WOMAN

Is it good... or bad?

HUSBAND

There is hope yet, Caroline.

WOMAN

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

HUSBAND

He is past relenting. He is dead.

WOMAN

God forgive me, but I feel joy in my heart to hear it.

HUSBAND

What the half-drunken woman of 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 mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then.

WOMAN

To whom will our debt be transferred?

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 bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep tonight with light hearts, Caroline!

WOMAN

Oh yes, my darling.

(They kiss in the fading light; Scrooge once again turns to the Spirit.)

SCROOGE

Is the only emotion you can show me caused by this man's death that of pleasure? 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.

(Once again, the Spirit waves his arms and lights come up on the Cratchit house in a different part of the stage.)

PETER

(Reading from the Bible.) "And He took a child and set him in the midst of them."

(He cannot go on but looks at an empty stool and crutch beside it — the family is silent in grief.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

(Laying her sewing aside.) The color hurts my eyes. *(She breaks down for the briefest of moments.)* 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.

PETER

Past it rather. But I think he's 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.

CHILDREN

And so have I!

MRS.- CRATCHIT

(Resuming her sewing.) But he was very light to carry and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble — no trouble. And there is your father at the door.

(Enter a saddened Cratchit — the children rush to him, and he picks them up and sits down with them.)

MRS. CRATCHIT

The tea shall be ready soon, Robert.

PETER

Hello, father.

BELINDA

Hello, father.

SARAH

Don't mind it, father.

(These last lines have tumbled together.)

CRATCHIT

O my children, my children, and my lovely wife.

CRATCHIT

Well, what have we done here? Look at the fine sewing of the ladies of the house. You'll be done long before Sunday then?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Sunday! 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 on a Sunday. My little, little child. My little child.

*(He breaks down suddenly and the children hug him as do all the family
— there is a moment of grief from which they eventually all relax.)*

CRATCHIT

Forgive me. Forgive me. I am composed. *(He purposefully changes the subject.)* I met Mr. Scrooge's nephew in the street today. I have scarcely seen him but once or twice but seeing that I looked - just a little down you know - he inquired what had happened to distress me.

MRS. CRATCHIT

He sounds most kind.

CRATCHIT

On which, for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. "I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit" he said, "and heartily sorry for your good wife". Bye 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 any 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 someone and setting up for himself.

PETER

Get along with you!

CRATCHIT

Just as likely as not one of these days; though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But how ever and whenever 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

(They all hug and kiss one another.)

CRATCHIT

I am very happy. I am very happy!

(He turns upstage from the scene and though standing, his entire body convulses with grief. The scene fades into darkness as Scrooge turns to the Spirit.)

SCROOGE

Specter, 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?

(The Spirit starts to walk away, Scrooge following. Scrooge sees something suddenly and stops — the Spirit continues slowly away.)

SCROOGE

Spirit! Spirit! *(Suddenly he sees they have changed location.)* Where are you conveying me? A churchyard! Here, then, I am to learn the name of that wretched man who...

(An eerie light rises on a large gravestone. The Spirit points to it.)

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?

(The Spirit continues to point.)

SCROOGE

Spirit, am I that man who lay upon the bed?

(The Spirit gestures and the gravestone is more fully illuminated with the name "EBENEZER SCROOGE" engraved upon it. Scrooge reels back rushing to the Spirit on his knees.)

SCROOGE

No, Spirit! Oh no, no! Hear me! I am not the man I was. Why show me this, if I am past all hope! Good Spirit, assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!

(Scrooge turns front in the attitude of prayer and the Spirit starts to recede upstage into the darkness.)

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 wash away the writing on this stone!

(He turns to find that the Spirit has gone and Scrooge rushes off into the darkness.)

SCROOGE

Spirit!!!

Scene Six

(As restore we see Scrooge in this bed hanging onto the bedpost and curtains mumbling in his sleep to himself.)

SCROOGE

I will, I will, I will, I will.

(Scrooge slowly realizes that it is indeed the bedpost and not the SPIRIT's leg that he is hanging onto.)

NARRATOR 1

Yes! The bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

SCROOGE

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

(Scrooge has gotten out of bed, reeled about the room briefly and fallen to his knees. He now finds the bed curtains near him.)

SCROOGE

They are not torn down. *(Folding them in his arms.)* They are not torn down, rings and all. They are here; I am here; the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be, I know they will! *(He starts to try to dress.)* I don't know what to do! *(He is laughing and crying at the same time.)* I am light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A Merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!

(For a moment he is perfectly winded. But soon he starts off again. He laughs, laughing and crying in the same breath – a large laugh.)

NARRATOR 1

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

SCROOGE

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 am quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby! Hallo! Whoop! Hallo there!

(Church bells start to ring. He runs to the window throwing it open.)

SCROOGE

Heavenly, sweet fresh air, merry bells. Oh, glorious, glorious! *(Seeing a boy passing in the street.)* You, you boy!

BOY

Eh?

SCROOGE

What's today?

BOY

Eh?

SCROOGE

What's today, my fine fellow?

BOY

Today! Why, Christmas Day.

SCROOGE

(To himself) 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! *(Back to the boy.)*

BOY

Hallo!

SCROOGE

Do you know the Poulterers 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

Walk-er!

SCROOGE

No, no I am in earnest. Go and buy it and tell 'em 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

Yes sir!

NARRATOR 2

The boy was off like a shot!

(The Boy is gone.)

SCROOGE

I'll send it to Bob Cratchits! He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim!

BOY

(Running on from offstage.) Hallo! Here's the turkey!

SCROOGE

That was quick! So here's the Turkey. Hallo! How are you! Merry Christmas! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

(Scrooge exits the stage as the Narrator steps into the action.)

NARRATOR 3

It was with a chuckle that he said this, and with a chuckle that he paid for the turkey, and with a chuckle that he recompensed the boy, and that dispensed, he chuckled till he cried. Then breathlessly he dressed himself "all in his best" and at last got out into the streets.

(Suddenly the stage is alive again with a scene not unlike that Scrooge experienced with the Ghost of Christmas Present — only he is alive among the people this time, smiling, tipping his hat, wishing all a Merry Christmas etc.)

SCROOGE

Good morning, sir! Good morning, Madame! A Merry Christmas to you! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

(Coming onto the stage is the Businessman from the opening scene to whom Scrooge denied a donation. Scrooge stops him on his journey.)

SCROOGE

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

BUSINESSMAN 1

Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE

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

(Here Scrooge whispers something into the Businessman's ear.)

BUSINESSMAN 1

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

SCROOGE

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

BUSINESSMAN 1

My dear Sir. *(Shaking Scrooge's hand.)* 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?

BUSINESSMAN 1

I will!

SCROOGE

Thank'ee. I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you.

(Scrooge and the Man part. Scrooge once again turns to survey the joy of Christmas as the Narrators step further into the action.)

NARRATOR 3

Scrooge found himself near the open door of a church. He went inside and for the first time as a man he joined his voice to those of his fellow creatures in a Christmas hymn.

(The company becomes a singing congregation and sings a Christmas hymn TBD. Scrooge stands to the side and haltingly joins in the song.)

SCROOGE

"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" or some hymn TBD.

NARRATOR 4

Afterwards Scrooge 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.

NARRATOR 1

He had never dreamed that any walk — that anything — could give him so much happiness.

NARRATOR 2

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. But he made a dash and did it!

(The lights come up to reveal the Nephew's home with Fred and Charlotte.)

SCROOGE

(Surprising them) Fred!

NEPHEW

Why, bless my soul!

SCROOGE

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

NEPHEW

Let you in? (*Shaking his hand off.*) There could be no more wonderful surprise. Come in, come in Uncle Scrooge! And Merry Christmas!

(The lights fade as the stage once more is returned to the Narrators)

NARRATOR 3

Nothing could have been heartier. Charlotte looked just the same, so did Topper, so did Cynthia, the silly sister. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness.

NARRATOR 4

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first and catch Bob Cratchit coming in late. That was the thing he had set heart upon.

(Lights have come up on the office and Scrooge arriving and preparing with joy for Bob's late arrival.)

NARRATOR 1

And he did it. Yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time.

(Bob comes running in and sits quietly down after tiptoeing to his desk.)

SCROOGE

Cratchit! (*Growling*) What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?

CRATCHIT

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

SCROOGE

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

(Cratchit advances to Scrooge 's desk.)

CRATCHIT

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

SCROOGE

Now, I'll tell you what, my friend. I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore — (*He digs Bob in the ribs.*) — and therefore I am about to raise your salary!

NARRATOR 2

Bob began to tremble and picked up his ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat. He stopped himself just in time.

CRATCHIT

Oh, please sir, have pity. it's only...

SCROOGE

A Merry Christmas, Bob! *(Clapping him on the back.)* 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 afternoon over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob. Make up the fire and buy another coalscuttle before you dot another "i" Bob Cratchit!

CRATCHIT

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

(Cratchit goes off to embrace Mrs. Cratchit SL and leaves Scrooge center as the entire Company begins to close in. The Company begins very faintly to hum "God Rest You Merry Gentleman" or come other carol TBD as they draw into the middle of the stage around Scrooge.)

NARRATOR 3

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim...

NARRATOR 4

who did NOT die...

SCROOGE

I was a second father!

NARRATOR 1

He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew.

NARRATOR 2

Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them. His own heart laughed; and that was quite enough for him.

NARRATOR 3

And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us!

NARRATOR 4

And so, as Tiny Tim observed

(The entire company is now onstage in a tableau, and Tiny Tim is in Scrooge's arms.)

TINY TIM

God bless Us, Every One!

COMPANY

God bless Us, Every One!

(The entire company now sings all or part of a Christmas Carol TBD and encourages the audience to sing along. This audience/company sing-

along accompanies the curtain call. As Scrooge takes the final bow, the music climaxes, and the lights go to black.)

(End of the Play)