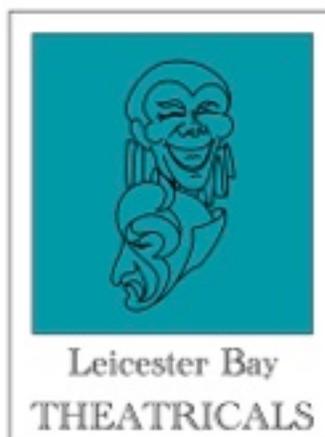


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Salt Lake City

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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NOTES

A Christmas Carol can be staged simply, elaborately, or anywhere in between. This script has been closely adapted from Charles Dickens' story and retains the humor, drama, style and colorful characters of his original work. It is important that the director become comfortable with the Readers Theatre techniques of performers playing multiple roles, performers speaking directly to the audience, and performers narrating their own characters.

COMPANY CONCEPT: Part of the style and magic of this show is that the company members stay on stage, watching (if not participating), during many of the scenes. Actors at times serve as narrators and at other times play characters. Every performer, except Scrooge, doubles in two to five roles. Each scene is narrated by small groups of from one to five performers. They can be grouped in various pictures and locations on stage from scene to scene for variety and interest.

CASTING: This script is prepared for a twenty-six person company, thirteen men and thirteen women. However, casting can be effective many different ways. The list of the original production is included, suggesting only one way of casting which works. There are, of course, many others. The company can be expanded or contracted depending upon the needs and resources of the producing group.

SET: Locations should be established simply, through chairs, tables, desks, and other furniture pieces. Lighting can also help establish time and place. Walls, wagon units and other extensive set constructions are not necessary.

MUSIC: Music and sound are important to this production. Pre-show, post-show, theme and scene change music can be recordings of English Christmas carols or whatever the director feels appropriate. However, much of the music within scenes, and all of the sound effects should be created onstage, by the company members, through the use of musical instruments and percussion pieces, such as a flute, a violin, a pitch pipe, bells, chimes, woodblocks, chains, etc. The company members sing Christmas carols. They create the sounds of clocks bonging, the dragging of Marley's chains, doors closing, knocking on doors, ghosts on the air, keys turning in locks, etc.

COSTUMES: Costumes should be of the period, 19th century England, around 1850, near the date Dickens wrote his "little carol." The costumes in Stave Two, the Ghost of Christmas Past, should be approximately of the 1780's, the time when Scrooge would have been a child.

SCRIPT STRUCTURE: The legend to understanding the structure of the script follows. The play retains the paragraph form of the original story. The numbers in parentheses indicate who speaks the line, phrase or word, each performer having been assigned a number. At times the character name is used instead of a number. Narrative passages appearing in **[bold face]** with [brackets] are part of the story as written by Charles Dickens (For Dickens was also a playwright.) They are left in this script as notes or suggestions for staging, character development, textural qualities, etc., but should not to be spoken by any of the performers. Stage directions or comments which are not Charles Dickens' are set off in **(bold italic type)** with/or not (parenthesis), reflecting what was done in the original staging of this script and can be followed or ignored as the director wishes.

ORIGINAL COMPANY MEMBERS (in alphabetical order): The first production of this script was staged in the Snow Theatre on the BYU-Idaho campus, November 28-30, and December 1,4-8, 1984. All company members performed as narrators as well as the following characters:

Heidi Brown.....	Belinda Cratchit
Kimball Brown.....	Tiny Tim
John P. Carmona.....	First Gentleman
Douglas M. Chausow.....	Ebenezer Scrooge
Sheila Dawn Clayton.....	Mrs. Cratchit
JaNae Gibbs.....	Ghost of Christmas Present
Peggy Harrop.....	Fezziwig's Daughter
Becky Blue Helsing.....	Fred's Wife, Mrs. Dilber
Ron A. Jewett.....	Bob Cratchit
Scott I. Lehr.....	Boy Scrooge
Heidi Ann McDonald.....	Charwoman
Amy Miller.....	Housemaid, Belle's Daughter
Eric Oliphant.....	Apprentice Scrooge, Boy
Michael Foster Ott.....	Peter Cratchit
Jyl Parker.....	Martha Cratchit
Stephen Poulter.....	Old Fezziwig, Topper
Caroline Prohosky.....	Scrooge's Niece's Sister
Matthew Reeves.....	Dick Wilkins, Undertaker's Man
Brian Eugene Stanton Jr.	Belle's Husband, Miner, Ghost of Christmas Future
Tom Taylor.....	Fred
Paula Tegan.....	Miner's Wife, Mother
Karine Towers.....	Ghost of Christmas Past
Michelle Diane Turnbull.....	Fiddler
Leslie Warwood.....	Ghost of Marley, Mature Scrooge, Old Joe
Paula Wetherington.....	Belle

SUGGESTED CASTING SCHEDULE:

Performer

Number

Characters

Men

1	Old Joe, Narrator
2	Bob Cratchit, Milkman, Narrator
3	First Gentleman, Narrator
4	Old Fezziwig, Topper, Narrator
5	Dick Wilkins, Undertaker's Man, Narrator
6	Fred, Narrator
7	Boy Scrooge, Narrator
8	Apprentice Scrooge, Boy, Narrator
9	Second Gentleman, Baker, Belle's Husband, Miner, Ghost of Christmas Future, Narrator
10	Peter Cratchit, Narrator
11	Marley, Mature Scrooge, Father, Narrator
12	Scrooge, Narrator
13	Tiny Tim, Narrator

Women

14	Housemaid, Belle's Daughter, Narrator
15	Mrs. Fezziwig, Ghost of Christmas Present, Narrator
16	Fiddler, Narrator
17	Charwoman, Narrator
18	Cook, Mrs. Cratchit, Narrator
19	Fezziwig's Daughter, Narrator
20	Fezziwig's Daughter, Martha Cratchit, Narrator
21	Fred's Wife, Mrs. Dilber, Narrator
22	Ghost of Christmas Past, Narrator
23	Belle Narrator
24	Miner's Wife, Mother, Narrator
25	Scrooge's Niece's Sister, Narrator
26	Melinda Cratchit, Fezziwig's Daughter, Narrator

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Adapted from the Dickens classic by *Rodger Sorensen*. Company of 10 M 11W 3B 2G. Simple Settings with props. The traditional story told in the most un-traditional way! In Rodger's uniquely and dramatically narrative voice the characters will jump to life for your audiences; and the meaning of the play, with such importance for today's audiences, will not be missed or forgotten. Dickens' characters were never so jolly, or important as they are in this special adaptation. **Order # 3051**

Rodger Sorensen is a professor of Theatre and Media Arts and serves as Associate Dean in the College of Fine Arts and Communications at Brigham Young University. Prior to his appointment as Associate Dean he served as the Chair of the Theatre and Media Arts Department for seven years. Before coming to BYU in 1996 Sorensen taught at the College of Eastern Utah from 1974-1979 and also at Ricks College (BYU-Idaho) from 1979-1996, serving as the Theatre Department Chair at BYU-I for ten years. He completed his PhD at the University of Texas at Dallas (1999). His dissertation explored "Alchemy, Nature, and Time in 'Pericles' and 'The Winter's Tale'".

Sorensen has directed over a hundred theatre productions, including premieres of original scripts, adaptations of his own devised pieces, a range of interdisciplinary projects, many operas, musicals, dramas, and comedies. He worked every summer on the Hill Cumorah Pageant near Palmyra, New York, from 1978 to 2004, where he served as Artistic Director starting in 1997.

Sorensen specializes in teaching directing for the stage, and emphasizes developing new works. He presented a BYU campus devotional in 2008 entitled "Evidences of the Heart". He is the Focus Group Representative for the Playwrights and Creative Teams of the Association of Theatre in Higher Education. In 2010 he received the "Excellence in Theatre Education" Award, presented by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region VIII. In 2011 he was recognized by SCERA with their Star Award for his significant contributions to enriching the communities and citizens of Utah Valley through the arts.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by Charles Dickens
adapted for the stage by Rodger D. Sorensen

**STAVE ONE:
MARLEY'S GHOST**

The Preshow music plays for twenty to thirty minutes before curtain. Cast members are into costumes and makeup by thirty minutes before curtain and selected cast members serve as ushers and takes tickets, adding an ambiance of authenticity to the theatre before the play begins. By curtain time all cast members are in the audience; the show begins, and the house lights fade. The actors enter the stage from the house, and as the last actor comes to stage, the house lights are completely out. The company joins together at center stage in a tableau, and stage lights fade to silhouette. Lights come up again on actors, the music fades out, and the narration begins.

(14) Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. **(1)** The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, **(2)** the clerk, **(9)** the undertaker, **(12)** and the chief mourner. **(22)** Scrooge signed it. **(25)** And Scrooge's name was good under change for anything he chose to put his hand to.

(14) Old Marley was dead as a door-nail.

(11) Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own Knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a doornail. **(17)** I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. **(10)** But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; **(7)** and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. **(14)** You will therefore permit me to repeat, **(11)** emphatically, **(14)** that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

All the company members lower their heads. Just before they speak, each performer will raise their heads, speak, and lower their heads again.

(3) Scrooge knew he was dead? **(15)** Of course he did. **(5)** Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. **(16)** Scrooge was his sole executor, **(18)** his sole administrator, **(24)** his sole friend, **(all)** and **(3)** his sole mourner.

(1) There is no doubt that Marley was dead. **(14)** This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story we are going to relate.

The narration continues, using only five voices (6, 8, 19, 20, and 21) and the rest of the company (except

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Scrooge) moves from opening tableau and sets up Scrooge's Counting House. Lights begin changing, the five voices move DS into another tableau around Scrooge (12) who moves down front and sits on edge of stage. After a few seconds speaking Scrooge is seated down front. After setting up the Counting House, the performers find places on stage from which to watch the next scene.

(6) Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, **(19)** Scrooge! **(8)** A squeezing, **(21)** wrenching, **(20)** grasping, **(6)** scraping, **(20)** clutching, **(21)** covetous, **(8)** old sinner! **(19)** Hard and sharp as flint, **(21)** secret, and self-contained, **(6)** solitary as an oyster.

The five voices join the rest of the company somewhere on stage as another voice (11) takes over the narration. Scrooge moves during this narration to near CS, standing BTA (back to audience).

(11) The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. He carried his own low temperature always about with him.

Scrooge turns FTA (front to audience), standing CS as the two smallest children of the company (Tiny Tim and Melinda Cratchit) flank him and narrate the next two paragraphs.

(26) 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.

(13) Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "'No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!'

SCENE TWO

Music begins, two narrators (11 & 14) introduce the next scene as the two children join the company, watching, and Scrooge enters his Counting House (two desks and two stools).

(14) Once upon a time – **(11)** on Christmas Eve – **(14)** old Scrooge sat busy in his counting house. **(11)** The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already – **(14)** it had not been light all day – **(11)** and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighboring offices. **(14)** The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, **(11)** that although the court was of the narrowest, **(14)** the houses opposite were mere phantoms.

Music fades out and the scene begins. (2) is Bob Cratchit, (12) is Scrooge, and (6) is Fred, Scrooges Nephew. Cratchit, Scrooge, and Fred, perform and narrate themselves at the same time.

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(2) The door of Scrooge's counting house was open that he might keep an eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond was copying letters. **(12)** Scrooge had a very small fire, **(2)** but the clerk's ("*clerk*" may be pronounced the British way, "*clark*," if desired) fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. **(12)** But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal box in his own room; **(2)** (*moving to the coal box, spoken to the audience*) and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, **(12)** (*spoken to the audience, after which he glares as Cratchit*) the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. **(2)** (*To the audience, moving back to his desk, putting on his comforter*) 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.

Cratchit sits on his stool at his desk as Fred (6) enters the Counting House space and approaches Scrooge.

(6) A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you! [cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.]

(12) Bah! **(2)** said Scrooge. **(12)** Humbug!

[He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.]

(6) Christmas a humbug, Uncle! **(2)** said Scrooge's nephew. **(6)** You don't mean that, I am sure?

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

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

(12) (*To audience*) Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, **(To Fred)** Bah! **(2)** (*To audience*) again, **(12)** (*to audience*) and followed it up with (*to Fred*) Humbug!

FRED: Don't be cross, Uncle!

SCROOGE: What else can I be, when I live in such a world of fools as this? If I could work my will, every idiot which goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart, he should!

FRED: Uncle!

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

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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 have always thought of Christmas time as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of 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!

[The clerk involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible to the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark forever.]

SCROOGE: Let me hear another sound from you, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! 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, Cratchit, and Fred freeze while the two narrators come through the scene to perform their paragraph.

(14) Scrooge said that he would see him-- **(11)** (*interrupting her*) Yes, indeed he did. **(14)** He went to the whole length of the expression, **(11)** (*interrupting her again, and concluding*) and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

The narrators look at each other, retreat, and Scrooge, Cratchit, and Fred unfreeze. The Scene continues.

FRED: But why? Why?

SCROOGE: Why did you get married?

FRED: Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE: Because you fell in love! Good afternoon!

FRED: Nay, Uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

FRED: We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party, and I'll Keep my Christmas humour to the last. So a Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

FRED: And a Happy New Year!

As Fred exits, he pauses at Cratchit's desk and says "Merry Christmas, Mr. Cratchit." Bob Cratchit follows Fred out with, "And to thee and thine, good sir." The next two characters (3 & 9), soliciting contributions for the poor; stand and come to USC, waiting for scene three to begin, for their entrance. Bob looks out to the audience with a festive countenance. Scrooge's next line is directed to the audience.

(12) There's another fellow, my clerk, with 15 shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

SCENE THREE

The Two Gentlemen enter the scene.

[This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in, who now stood, with their hats off (*both take hats off*), in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him. (*They both bow to Scrooge.*)]

(3) Scrooge and Marley's, I believe, **(9)** said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. **(3)** Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE: Mr. Marley died seven years ago, this very night.

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

(3) 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. **(9)** Many thousands are in want of common necessities; **(3)** hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE: Are there no prisons?

(3) Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE: And the Union workhouses? Are they still in operation?

(9) They are still. I wish I could say they were not.

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

(3) 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.

(9) Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth.

(3) 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!

(9) You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone. 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.

(3) 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.

(9) *(To the audience)* Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew.

The Two Gentlemen put on their hats and exit, returning to the ranks of the watching company members.

SCROOGE: *(To the audience)* Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Cratchit and Scrooge remain working at their desks. Narrators 11 and 17 slowly walk and join each other, 11 speaking as they move. The bongos of the ancient tower are produced on stage by a member of the company. When 17 begins "The owners of several scant young noses ..." four men, a male a cappella quartet, emerge from the group and create a tableau and, when 17 finishes, sing: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

(11) Meanwhile the fog and darkness thicken. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always

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peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. **(17)** The cold became intense.

(11) Piercing, searching, biting cold. **(17)** The owners of several scant young noses, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's Keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol.

One of the singers plays a note on a pitch pipe and they sing two verses of "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen!"

SCENE FOUR

(14) At length the hour of shutting up the counting house arrived. **(12)** With an ill will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, **(2)** and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

SCROOGE: You'll want all day off 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.

CRATCHIT: *(To the audience)* The clerk smiled faintly. *(Cratchit smiles at Scrooge.)*

SCROOGE: And yet you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

CRATCHIT: It is only once a year.

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

(2) *(To the audience)* The clerk promised that he would; **(12)** *(To the audience)* and Scrooge walked out with a growl.

Music begins. Narrator 14 moves to a focus position and speaks to the audience. The scene is changed from the counting house to a melancholy tavern: one stool, a small table with a candle, pen and paper on it. Lights follow the change. Scrooge sits at the small table.

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(14) The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist, **(2)** I boast no great-coat, **(14)** went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a land of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's bluff.

SCENE FIVE

A new group of narrators move into place and narrate this scene. Music fades out under the narration.

(4) Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usually melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, **(17)** and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, **(4)** went home to bed.

Music fades out. The scene is changed from the melancholy tavern to Scrooge's house: two stools by themselves, suggesting they are in front of the fireplace, and a table elsewhere. Scrooge moves around, stopping in front of an imaginary door, facing the audience.

(8) The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

(14) Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, **(4)** except that it was very large. **(17)** It is also a fact, that scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place. **(24)** Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-years dead partner that afternoon. **(8)** And then let any man explain to me, **(17)** if he can, **(8)** how it happened that Scrooge, **(24)** having his key in the lock of the door, **(8)** saw in the knocker, **(4)** without its undergoing any intermediate process of change -- **(8)** not a knocker, **(4, 8, 14, 17, 24)** but Marley's face.

4, 8, 14, 17, 24 speaking "Marley's face" together, and holding onto the final "s" sound, turn together to look at Marley. Marley's music begins, and Marley is illuminated with a tight green light on his face from the front and a wide red light from behind, below. Scrooge stays facing front, seeing the face in the knocker.

[It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look, with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless.]

(8) As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

The lights on Marley fade out. Marley's music fades out.

(17) He put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, (4) turned it sturdily, (8) walked in, (24) and lighted his candle.

(14) He paused, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; (8) and he looked cautiously behind it first. (14) But there was nothing on the back of the door, (4) except the screws and nuts that held the Knocker on, (14) so he said, (12) "Bah!", (9) and closed it with a bang.

An actor on stage shuts the door of a "door box."

[The sound 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. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stair; slowly too; trimming his candle as he went.]

(17) 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.

(8) Sitting-room, (24) bed-room, (4) lumber-room: (8, 24, 4) all as they should be. (24) Nobody under the table, (4) nobody under the sofa, (24) nobody under the bed; (8) nobody in the closet; (24) nobody in his dressing gown, (8) which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall.

SCROOGE: Humbug!

(14) said Scrooge and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

(17) As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, (24) a disused bell, (17) that hung in the room. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing.

Beginning with one actor ringing one bell, the number of bells and sounds crescendos until every company member is ringing a bell. After the line "The bells ceased as they had begun," all bells stop together on a cue.

(4) It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound, (8) but soon it rang out loudly, (24) and so did every bell in the house. (4, 8, 14, 17, 24) The bells ceased as they had begun, (*bells cease ringing*) (17) together.

Marley's music begins. Also, someone makes the sound of chains rattling by hitting chains against a hollow wooden box, etc., opening a door, supplementing the recorded music with live sounds.

(8) They were succeeded by a clanking noise, (4) deep down below, (8) as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casts in the wine-merchant's cellar. (24) Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

(4) The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, (4, 17) and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; (4, 17, 24) then coming up the stairs; (4, 8, 14, 17, 24) then coming straight towards his door.

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

(14) His color changed, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes.

(4, 8, 14, 17, 24) The same face; (17) the very same. [Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights, and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head.] (4) The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made [for Scrooge observed it closely] of cash-boxes, (24) Keys, (17) padlocks, (8) ledgers, (14) deeds, (24) and heavy purses wrought in steel. (4) His body was transparent; (12) so that Scrooge, observing him, (4) and looking through his waistcoat, (12) could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

(14) Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

SCROOGE: *Caustic and cold.* How now! What do you want with me?

Marley's music fades out. The sounds made by the "sound maker" faded earlier, whenever Marley stopped walking.

MARLEY: Much!

SCROOGE: Who are you?

MARLEY: Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE: Who were you then?

MARLEY: In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE: Can you--can you sit down?

MARLEY: I can.

SCROOGE: Do it, then.

(17) The ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

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 things 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 gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!

Scrooge, having walked over to the narrators during this speech, takes a toothpick from one of them, motions them away (so they can prepare for another scene), and turns to Marley.

SCROOGE: You see this toothpick?

MARLEY: 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!

[At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon.]

[Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face]

SCROOGE: Mercy! 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!

[Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.]

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 laboured on it since. It is a ponderous chain!

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

MARLEY: I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. In life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!

SCROOGE: You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.

MARLEY: Slow!

SCROOGE: Seven years dead, and traveling 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.

[The ghost, on hearing this 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.]

MARLEY: Oh! Captive, bound, and double-ironed, not to know! 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.

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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!

[It held up its chain at arms length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.]

MARLEY: At this time of the rolling 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! Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

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

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.

[It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.]

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.

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

MARLEY: Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!

Marley's music begins.

(8) The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

Beginning with this paragraph, the cast members, who are all on stage, begin making “incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory.” These sounds ebb and flow until “Scrooge closes the window,” (which he mimes). At that moment all sound, Marley’s music and wailings, stop at the drop of the window.

(17) On the raising of the window, Scrooge became sensible of confused noises in the air; **(4)** incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. **(17)** The spectre, after listening for a moment joined in the mournful dirge, and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

(8) Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity.

(24) The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. **(4)** Every one of them wore chains like Marley’s Ghost. **(14)** The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power forever.

(8) Scrooge closed the window. [He tried to say Humbug but stopped at the first syllable.] **(14)** And being most in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

A flute (or another instrument) plays “Good King Wenceslas” as the scene changes. Many members of the company come together DSC to sing the English carol. Others prepare for the next stave by setting up Scrooge’s bedroom. When all finish, they disperse, the lights go black, and Stave Two begins as the lights come up to reveal Scrooge’s bedroom.

End of Stave One

STAVE TWO:

THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS

(18) When Scrooge awoke, **(3)** it was so dark that, looking out of bed, **(16)** he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber.

(5) He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, **(21)** when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the three quarters.

Chimes onstage strike the three quarters during previous line.

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(3) He remembered, (16) on a sudden, (3) that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled One. (16) He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to heaven, this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power. (3) At length it broke upon his listening ear.

The entire cast is onstage, sitting, standing. Side lightning. The cast sings the sound of the chiming of the hour. The chimes can also play along with the cast, if desired. The onstage bong marks the hour of one as the cast members join the sound of the chimes. They stand. The cast stays standing until all of them chime "one" together, and then they sit, or return to their positions. As they sit, the music for the First Ghost begins. He/She slowly enters the scene, being drawn in by the music.

1/4 CAST: Ding, dong!

SCROOGE: A quarter past.

1/2 CAST: Ding, dong!

SCROOGE: Half-past.

3/4 CAST: Ding, dong!

SCROOGE: A quarter to it.

FULL CAST: Ding, dong!

SCROOGE: The hour itself, and nothing else!

(18) He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy (ALL) ONE. (22 enters, playing *The Spirit of Christmas past*) (18) Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn aside. (12) Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them.

(18) It was a strange figure -- like a child; yet not so like a child a like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin.

[The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had, its dress

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trimmed with summer flowers. The strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which is now held under its arm.]

SCROOGE: Are you the spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?

SPIRIT (22): I am!

[The voice was soft, and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.]

SCROOGE: Who, and what are you?

SPIRIT: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE: Long past?

SPIRIT: No. Your past.

Scrooge, coming DS, says the following line to the audience.

SCROOGE: Scrooge had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap, and begged him to be covered.

Music fades out.

SPIRIT: What! Would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow?!

SCROOGE: *(To the audience.)* Scrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any knowledge of having willfully 'bonneted' the spirit at any period of his life. *(To the Spirit)* He then made bold to inquire what business brought him there.

SPIRIT: Your welfare!

SCROOGE: *(To the Audience)* Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end.

[The spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately]

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SPIRIT: Your reclamation, then. Take heed! Rise! And walk with me!

[He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped his robe in supplication.]

SCROOGE: I am a mortal and liable to fall.

SPIRIT: Bear but a touch of my hand *there*, and you shall be upheld in more than this!

Memory theme music begins. Scrooge/s bedroom is removed and through the movement of the performers, and the lighting, a new scene is suggested.

(5) As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall. The city entirely vanished. It was a clear, cold wintry day, with snow upon the ground.

Scrooge's bedroom dissolves and an old boarding school comes into focus.

SCENE TWO

SCROOGE: Good Heavens! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!

(21) The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand thoughts, **(18)** and joys, **(16)** and cares, **(21)** long, long forgotten!

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

(16) Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was:

SCROOGE: a pimple.

(16) and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

SPIRIT: You recollect the way?

SCROOGE: Remember it! I could walk it blindfolded.

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

During the next paragraph the company improvises a simple scene, boys going home from boarding school for the holidays, laughing, calling to one another, excited about the forthcoming Christmas

season.

(3) They walked along the road, Scrooge recognizing every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. **(5)** Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. **(18)** All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it!

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

A tableau is improvised during the next paragraph, this time all the company is involved, "parting at crossroads and bye-ways for their several homes." At the parting, the company gives each other "Merry Christmas" (all together; waving, laughing) and exits. During this exit one young performer brings a stool onstage and sits, representing the Boy Scrooge, having been left at the boarding school for the holidays. At the end of the paragraph, there are only three people on stage now: Scrooge, the Spirit, and the Boy Scrooge; and of course, the narrators.

(21) The jocund travelers came on; **(12)** and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. **(21)** Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! **(16)** Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past?! **(18)** Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other **(All)** Merry Christmas, **(18)** as they parted at crossroads and bye-ways, for their several homes! **(5)** What was Merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon Merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

SPIRIT: The school is not quite deserted.

(16) They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain desks. **(5)** At one of them a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a chair, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Memory theme music fades out.

(18) Not a latent echo in the house, **(21)** not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the paneling, **(3)** not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, **(21)** not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, **(18)** no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

[The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading.]

SCROOGE: I wish, but it's too late now.

SPIRIT: What is the matter?

SCROOGE: Nothing. Nothing. There were a group of boys singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I should like to have given them something. That's all.

Memory theme music begins again. Narrators exit as new ones enter. The Boy Scrooge stands and begins pacing the floor.

SCENE THREE

SPIRIT: Let us *see* another Christmas!

(20) Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. **(25)** Everything had happened so that there he was, alone again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays.

Little Fan (26) comes onstage, running to her brother, improvising a greeting and then playing the scene. The memory theme music fades out as the scene begins.

(20) He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. **(25)** The door opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her . . .

LITTLE FAN: Dear, dear brother. I have come to bring you home, dear brother! [Clapping her tiny hands and bending to laugh.] To bring you home, home, home!

YOUNGER SCROOGE: Home, little Fan?

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

YOUNGER SCROOGE: You are quite a woman, little Fan!

[She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.]

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

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

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

SCROOGE: One child.

SPIRIT: True, your nephew!

SCROOGE: (*Uneasily*) Yes.

Memory theme music begins again, cross fading into a more up-tempo piece for the Fezziwig scene. During the next paragraph the performers change the scene from the Schoolhouse (one stool) to the Fezziwig warehouse (three desks and three stools), one desk and stool high ones of the period.

SCENE FOUR

(20) Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, (25) where shadowy passengers passed and repassed, (20) where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. (25) It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; (20) but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

(25) The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

SCROOGE: Know it! Was I not apprenticed here!

Lights up on the Fezziwig scene, Fezziwig (4) at the high desk, Apprentice Scrooge (8) and Dick Wilkins (5) at the other desk, working.

[They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement.]

SCROOGE: Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!

[Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:]

FEZZIWIG (4): Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!

Fezziwig, Dick, and Ebenezer freeze in tableau.

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

Fezziwig, Dick, and Ebenezer unfreeze.

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!

Fezziwig and the boys remove desks and prepare for the next sequence. The "Fiddler" (15) comes on and stands on a tall stool, holding a stick. The remainder of the company follow her on and set into a tableau. They are in place by "fifty stomach-aches."

(5) You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! **(8)** They charged into the street with the shutters -- **(5)** one, two, three -- **(8)** had 'em up in their places -- **(5)** four, five, six -- **(8)** barred 'em and pinned 'em -- **(5)** seven, eight, nine -- **(8)** and came back before YOU could have got to twelve, **(5 & 8)** panting like race-horses.

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

(8) Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. **(5)** It was done in a minute.

(16) In came a fiddler with a music book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches.

Fezziwig music ends. The "Fiddler" taps her stool with a stick, hums, and begins the paragraph as if giving the downbeat to a musical piece. The tableau is not frozen, but rather alive with the actions of the characters.

(15) In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. **(19)** In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, **(20)** beaming, **(26)** and lovable. **(6)** In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. **(11)** In came all the young men and women employed in the business. **(14)** In came the housemaid, **(9)** with her cousin, the baker. **(18)** In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, **(2)** the milkman. **(13)** In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master. **(25)** In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; **(All who have spoken in the paragraph)** in they all came, **(25)** anyhow and everyhow.

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Music begins. The company dances a quadrille or another 19th century dance, some dancing, some watching, etc. Scrooge, without a partner, joins in "unnoticed" by the other participants. When the dance is over, someone strikes eleven on the chimes and the company exits, leaving Scrooge, the Spirit, and the narrators alone onstage.

(20) When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up.

(25) During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. **(7)** His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. **(25)** It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, **(20)** while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

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

SCROOGE: Small!

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

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

[He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.]

SPIRIT: What is the matter?

SCROOGE: Nothing particular.

SPIRIT: 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.

Memory theme music begins. Two men move a sofa onto center stage, and Belle (23) and Mature Scrooge (11) move onto it, all during the next paragraph. Memory music fades out as Belle begins speaking.

SCENE FIVE

SPIRIT: My time grows short. Quick!

(7) Again Scrooge saw himself. (20) He was older now; a man in the prime of life. [His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice.] (25) There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

[He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were .tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.]

Scrooge watches this scene without moving.

BELLE (23): It matters 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.

MATURE SCROOGE (11): What idol has displaced you?

BELLE: A golden one.

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

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

MATURE SCROOGE: What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you. *She 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.

MATURE SCROOGE: I was a boy.

BELLE: Your own feeling tells 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. 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.

MATURE SCROOGE: Have I ever sought release?

BELLE: In words, no. Never.

MATURE 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!

MATURE SCROOGE: [He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle,] You think not.

BELLE: I would gladly think otherwise if I could. Heaven knows! But if you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl -- you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by gain; or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

[He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.]

BELLE: May you be happy in the life you have chosen! [She left him, and they parted.]

Belle exits, leaving Mature Scrooge, Scrooge and the Spirit on stage. Memory music begins. Mature Scrooge exits, and scene six begins.

SCENE SIX

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

SPIRIT: One shadow more!

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

The Spirit gestures, "pinioning" scrooge.

(20) But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

The music continues. Selected company members come onstage, bringing a chair, rearranging the sofa, and creating the set for Belle's home after she married and had children. The set complete, the scene continues, Belle (23) in the chair, her daughter (14) on the sofa. The selected company members (those performing as "children" in the upcoming scene) are frozen in a tableau USC. The "children" in their tableau enter the scene vocally, not physically.

(23) They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. (14) Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, (12) so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, (23) until he saw her, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. (25) The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, ...

On a cue from Narrator 25 -- the snap of her fingers -- the USC tableau unfreezes and a vocal improvisation of happy children at Christmas instantly erupts. The Narrator gets their attention, focus and quiet by clapping her hands, and then she continues her narration.

... for there were more children there, than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count; (7) and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, (20) they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child conducting itself like forty.

Belle's husband (9) enters and mimes a knock. One of the company actually supplies the sound by knocking on the "doorbox" somewhere on stage.

(7) But now, a knocking at the door was heard: (25) the father attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents.

The Narrator (25) snaps her fingers again. The children again erupt, this time in joy to see their father and the gifts. The "children" stay USC. Narrator (25) crosses to the children and gently quiets them to silence. They all bow their heads. The narration continues.

(7) Then the shouting and struggling, and onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! (20) The scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pockets. (25) The shouts of wonder and delight. (*No shouts this time. The children, all together, raise their heads and smile with anticipation of presents. Then by one and twos, they sit down, out of the scene.*) (9) The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy! (25) It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, (20) and by one stair at a time, (7) up to the top of the house; (25) where they went to bed, and so subsided.

(7) And now, Scrooge looked more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and (25) when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him (12) father, (25) and been a springtime in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

HUSBAND (9): Belle, I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.

BELLE (23): Who was it?

HUSBAND: Guess!

A Christmas Carol adapted by *Rodger D. Sorensen*

BELLE: How can I? Tut, don't I know? [She added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed.] Mr. Scrooge.

HUSBAND: Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and 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.

Memory music begins. The company strikes the set and returns it to Scrooge's bedroom. All exit but Scrooge and the Spirit.

SCENE SEVEN

SCROOGE: Spirit! Remove me from this place.

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

SCROOGE: Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!

(20) He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; **(7)** and, further, of being in his own bedroom. **(25)** He had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

End of Stave Two

The Spirit of Christmas Present (15) brings in her stool and sits in silhouette. The Narrators enter into a tight tableau and start their narration as Stave Three begins. Scrooge's Bedroom.

STAVES THREE, FOUR and FIVE make up an additional 28 pages