

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: THE CLASSIC RADIO DRAMA

by Matthew Salazar-Thompson

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An adaptation of the classic tale by Charles Dickens

by Matthew Salazar-Thompson

SYNOPSIS: The year is 1943. Local Riverside, Iowa radio station WKMB is transmitting the Charles Dickens' classic on Christmas night. Outside a blizzard is making travel difficult and halfway through the broadcast the cast and crew of the Liberty Station Players are snowed in. In the holiday spirit they continue transmitting and later decide to have their own Christmas at the radio station. Using radio drama scripts and live Foley sound effects, this adaptation includes all the favorite characters, holiday songs, golden age commercials and humbling displays of human compassion that makes Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* a timeless classic.

DURATION: 110 minutes.

TIME: 1943.

PLACE: Interior of a radio station.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 females, 3 males, 2-32 either)

DOUGLAS (m).....Plays Ebenezer Scrooge. (10 lines)

IAN (m/f) Narrates our story and plays the Sponsor
Announcer. (20 lines)

NORMAN (m).....Esther's fiancé, plays ambitious young actor who plays Young Scrooge, Ghost of Christmas Present, Nephew Fred, Peter Cratchit, Charity Worker #1, Ensemble #1, Husband, Business Person #3, The Ghost of Marley. (24 lines)

HARRY (m)Plays the Stage Manager for the show, Fezziwig, The Ghost of Christmas Future, Business Person #1, Ensemble #2, Bob Cratchit, Commercial Singer #1. (34 lines)

CHICK (m/f).....The Foley artist, Ensemble #6. (9 lines)

ESTHER (f)Norman's fiancée, a local talent and singer plays Ghost of Christmas Past,

	Martha Cratchit, Fan, Belle, Elizabeth, Ensemble # 3, Wife, Commercial Singer #2. (22 lines)
CAROLYN (f).....	Ruth's mother. Plays Mrs. Cratchit, Mrs. Dilber, Topper, Charity Worker #2, Businesswoman, Ensemble #4, Business Person #2, Commercial Singer # 3. (32 lines)
RUTH (f).....	Carolyn's daughter. Plays the Ghost of Christmas Past, Tiny Tim, Boy, Ensemble #5. (7 lines)

CHARACTERS LISTED IN THE RADIO DRAMA:

EBENEZER SCROOGE.....	(285 lines)
YOUNG SCROOGE.....	(25 lines)
VERY YOUNG SCROOGE	(3 lines)
JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST	(26 lines)
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST	(30 lines)
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT	(20 lines)
GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE	(2 lines)
FEZZIWIG.....	(7 lines)
MRS. FEZZIWIG	(3 lines)
BOB CRATCHIT	(55 lines)
MRS. CRATCHIT.....	(47 lines)
PETER CRATCHIT.....	(20 lines)
MARTHA CRATCHIT	(24 lines)
TINY TIM.....	(32 lines)
MRS. DILBER.....	(27 lines)
FAN.....	(3 lines)
BELLE	(23 lines)
NEPHEW FRED.....	(45 lines)
TOPPER.....	(11 lines)
ELIZABETH.....	(21 lines)
SARAH	(12 lines)
BOY	(8 lines)
NARRATOR.....	(151 lines)
CHARITY WORKER #1	(15 lines)
CHARITY WORKER #2.....	(14 lines)

BUSINESS PERSON #1	(6 lines)
BUSINESS PERSON #2	(5 lines)
BUSINESS PERSON #3	(3 lines)
ENSEMBLE #1	(12 lines)
ENSEMBLE #2	(16 lines)
ENSEMBLE #3	(16 lines)
ENSEMBLE #4	(8 lines)
ENSEMBLE #5	(5 lines)
ENSEMBLE #6	(5 lines)
SALESMAN	(4 lines)
HUSBAND	(4 lines)
WIFE.....	(5 lines)
COMMERCIAL SINGER#1-3	This number may be expanded to fit the production. (<i>Singing only.</i>)

PRODUCTION NOTES

The production makes an excellent fully produced play with minimal rehearsal since most of the actors are reading from the “radio play” script. The Foley artist truly brings the piece alive and is a lot of fun for not only the Foley artists but the audience as well. Use as many of these suggestions as one feels is needed. If there are sections where more Foley SFX are necessary be as creative as you like with your additions. Live music also adds to the experience. The original production had one actor on the piano and another on the fiddle, but one or the other or canned music is perfectly fine. Feel free to use different classic Christmas songs where deemed necessary. The commercials are lots of fun. The original production sang most of the commercial jingles acapella but feel free to use live music whenever necessary. The music for the jingles is up to the discretion of the production, as there is not official-published music for these jingles. The production can make the final decision on what actor plays what roles. Roles can be spread out with as many actors as deemed necessary for the production. For the purposes of this script I have collected the characters and the roles each of the them play in the radio drama. Feel free to spread these around to other actors or to add as many actors as are needed.

SET

One unit set. The set consists of a control both off to one side with a telephone and an area set aside for the Foley Artist. Three or four vintage microphones litter the front of the stage facing the audience. The station is decorated in holiday cheer including a small Christmas tree.

PROPS

STANDARD PROPS

- ☐ Coffee mugs
- ☐ Several bound scripts
- ☐ Radio headphones
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Small megaphone

FOLEY ARTIST PROPS

- ☐ Kazoo
- ☐ Chimes
- ☐ Wooden Board
- ☐ Pair of heavy men's shoes.
- ☐ Chains
- ☐ A small door that can be shut
- ☐ Rain stick
- ☐ Slide whistle
- ☐ Xylophone
- ☐ Thunder board
- ☐ Two or three different sounding bells
- ☐ Door knocker
- ☐ Key and lock
- ☐ Tea cup and saucer
- ☐ Plates and silverware
- ☐ Old sliding window
- ☐ Small section of a curtain on a rod
- ☐ Metronome
- ☐ Coins

- ☐ Tin can
- ☐ Door chime
- ☐ Glass wine glasses
- ☐ Book
- ☐ Can of shaving cream
- ☐ Cardboard boxes

PREMIERE PRODUCTION

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: THE CLASSIC RADIO DRAMA premiered in 2016 at the The La Jolla Theatre Ensemble, La Jolla, CA.

ACT ONE

NOTE: These characters are all upbeat Midwestern folk. There is nothing tragic happening here tonight, for even little blunders and miscues draw smiles from the cast. The entire station is in good cheer.

SETTING: *Christmas Eve, 1943. Just a few minutes before 5pm. We are in the interior of the radio station at WFMB in Riverside, Iowa. The set consists of a control both off to one side with a telephone and an area set aside for the Foley Artist. Three or four vintage microphones litter the front of the stage facing the audience. The station is decorated in holiday cheer including a small Christmas tree.*

The lights are up on stage. As the house opens we hear a mix of holiday classics and old advertisements as if this is coming from the radio station. HARRY, the stage manager goes about checking on the microphones, the Foley props, etc... ensuring that the production is ready for broadcast.

As show time nears IAN enters with a platter of food covered in wax paper. From the control booth, HARRY fades the music to a low audible bed.

IAN: Harry, how are you?

HARRY: Putting out fires as usual. Thanks Ian. Happy Christmas Eve.

IAN: Same to you my friend.

HARRY: Cutting it close aren't you?

IAN: Where are we?

HARRY: Twenty seconds.

IAN: Got it! It's coming down something awful out there isn't it?

HARRY: You bet. As long as that wind chill doesn't get too low we'll be okay.

IAN: How's Beth?

HARRY: With her mother tonight. She made some cookies for the cast.

HARRY unveils a quaint plate of homemade cookies.

IAN: They look good.

HARRY: They taste even better. Five seconds.

IAN crosses to one of the microphones while HARRY rushes to the booth.

IAN: Right.

HARRY: Okay. We are live in...

We hear a short musical tag. He signals to IAN with his finger, "five, four, three, two..." HARRY then signals IAN to speak. He becomes the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR: This is WFMB Iowa! Your voice away from home broadcasting live from the Lockheart radio studio in Riverside, Iowa. We'd like to welcome all of those in the local area on this very blistery stormy Christmas Eve. It's just a few more hours until the jolly fat man joins each and every one of you in the bottom of your chimney. In the meantime we hope you'll join us at the top of the hour for our very own adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic story of *A Christmas Carol* brought to by the fine makers of Tidal Soap Detergent. Don't cast yourself away from the cleanest clothes on your block. When you want a tidal wave of freshness reach for Tidal Soap Detergent. Tonight you'll relive all of your favorite characters, holiday hits and humbling displays of human compassion. Coming up live in only three minutes. So, don't turn that dial. And stay tuned!

A small musical tag. Another classic Christmas song plays very low under the dialogue.

HARRY: And we're clear.

IAN: I'm going to grab some coffee. You want a cup?

HARRY: No thank you. Three minutes.

IAN: *(Smiling.)* Three minutes. Back in a flash.

IAN starts to exit just as NORMAN, ESTHER, CAROLYN, RUTH, and CHICK (and the rest of the cast if the production deems necessary) enter taking off their winter gear and hanging up their coats. There is a

lot of general greetings of joy and smiles all around. This goes on for a little while before HARRY interrupts them.

HARRY: Two minutes 'till air people! Two minutes!

HARRY is in the booth, on the phone. IAN exits. The rest of the cast continues to improvise more polite conversations as they get louder and louder. They gather around their respective microphones. CHICK goes to his area and tinkers with his props: shoes, slide whistle, chains, a xylophone, etc...

HARRY: *(Sticking his head out from the booth still on the phone.)*

Folks, folks? Could you keep it down please?

CAROLYN: Sorry Harry, we're just so happy to be warm and—

CHICK: You've got that right. Is there salt on the road?

The conversations simmer down a little bit but not much. RUTH steps in front of the group. They are all smiles towards her.

NORMAN: There she is! In her theatrical debut!

ESTHER: She is so precious. Are you ready for the broadcast sweetheart?

RUTH: I was born ready!

CAROLYN: That's my girl. Second place in the talent show in school this year.

They all gather around and congratulate her. IAN reenters with a cup of coffee. CAROLYN starts to tinkle a Christmas tune lightly on the piano, playing scales and warming up her voice. The other's follow.

IAN: But first place in our hearts tonight.

ESTHER: So true Ian.

CAROLYN: A good thought to my brother Richard.

IAN: Still overseas?

CAROLYN: Somewhere. This is the first Christmas he won't be home.

ESTHER: I'm sure he'll be alright.

There are more warm feelings and improvisation. CHICK enters.

HARRY: Two minutes to air. Could you... could you place that over there for me.

HARRY hands NORMAN a script which he puts on the music stand.

NORMAN: Where's Tommy?

HARRY: He's caught in the storm. I'm filling in. When it rains—

ESTHER: It snows! And boy is it snowing something awful out there!

CAROLYN: Have you seen Doug?

NORMAN: He said he didn't need a ride.

ESTHER: Did Charley say he'd drive him down?

NORMAN: I think so.

CAROLYN: We're going to have to double him up as well. Norman could you?

NORMAN: There's no way I could play Scrooge. I'm much too handsome.

ESTHER: Too handsome for me that is.

They all laugh as the couple share a quick little kiss.

CAROLYN: We know it's not cold in here, that's for sure.

Everyone laughs again.

ESTHER: Oh, I do hope Doug is alright.

HARRY: I'll give him a call just to make sure.

HARRY goes to the control booth and picks up the phone.

ESTHER: Thanks Harry.

NORMAN: (To RUTH.) Okay little monkey, I guess you're going to have to play Scrooge tonight. You ready?

RUTH: I was born ready!

They all laugh. DOUGLAS enters panting. They are all relieved.

CAROLYN: There he is!

NORMAN: Thank goodness!

They shake hands, give him a hug, etc... More good feelings abound.

DOUGLAS: What's the time?

NORMAN: Two minutes.

HARRY rushes out of the booth.

HARRY: Actually one minute!

NORMAN: One minute!

HARRY: We are sixty seconds to air everybody!

CAROLYN stops playing on the piano for a moment.

CAROLYN: Nice of you to join us Doug.

DOUGLAS: Charley was just trying to park and we slid right up and onto the sidewalk.

NORMAN: I don't think it's the weather. Charley normally drives on the sidewalk.

Everyone chuckles a little.

ESTHER: *(Smiling at him.)* Oh stop kidding him, Norm.

CAROLYN: *(To DOUG.)* It's a good thing your brother lives close to the station.

IAN: Charley sure can fix a car, he just can't drive one.

They all laugh.

CAROLYN: Lay off. If it wasn't for Charley none of us would be driving anywhere.

IAN: She's got us there!

ESTHER: *(Concerned.)* His car will be buried by morning by the look of it out there.

NORMAN: Charley's with the kids though?

DOUGLAS: And Marlene. They're nice and warm by the fire just a few blocks away. I'm sure. They've got a whole spread over there. You're all welcome to stop by after the broadcast.

General good cheers.

NORMAN: That sounds nice.

IAN: I just might do that.

CAROLYN: We could stop by for a bit, right pumpkin?

RUTH: It'd be a crime not to.

Everyone laughs at RUTH.

HARRY: Thirty seconds.

IAN: It's a hard wind tonight.

CAROLYN: Is Jessie home?

IAN: She's at her mother's with the kids.

CAROLYN: Send her my love.

IAN: Sure will.

HARRY: Twenty seconds.

DOUGLAS: *(To CHICK.)* How you doing Chick?

CHICK does something funny with the Foley props.

CHICK: Well I've got a new metronome, some new shoes and I've got a nice warm playpen in the middle of winter. I think Santa heard what I wanted for Christmas.

Everyone laughs.

DOUGLAS: Olive is well?

CHICK: She's cooking a duck as we speak.

CHICK gives a quack on the duck call. They all laugh and nod with agreement.

HARRY: Ten seconds.

CHICK: Have a great broadcast everyone.

CAROLYN: Okay crew, bold and bountiful!

THE ENTIRE CAST: Bold and bountiful!

DOUGLAS: (*To RUTH.*) You knock 'em dead kiddo!

RUTH: I always do.

HARRY: And five, four, three...

He mouths "two" and "one." He then points to CHICK. He plays the call signal on the xylophone or CAROLYN plays a dramatic opening on the piano.

NARRATOR: This is WFMB Riverside, Iowa! Your voice away from home!

COMMERCIAL SINGERS: WFMB!

NARRATOR: Good evening and a Merry Christmas Eve and we are live on the air this evening. Tonight the Liberty Station Players proudly present a very special centennial version of Charles Dickens' classic tale *A Christmas Carol*. Brought to you by our alternate sponsor Fulgers Coffee. Fulgers, always good to the last sip. Available now wherever fine coffee products are sold.

COMMERCIAL SINGERS: (*Acapella.*)

FULGER'S COFFEE FROM TOP TO TIP,
GOES DOWN SMOOTH WITH EVERY SIP,
FULGER'S!

NARRATOR: Every sip is a cup full of flavor! (*Beat.*) Before we begin our program we'd like to thank the boys in uniform across both the Pacific and the Atlantic. I'm talking about the boys on the front lines with machine guns in their hands...

CAROLYN: And the women here at home with rivet guns in their hands...

NARRATOR: We here at the Liberty Station Players want to acknowledge those men and women who are keeping this country safe.

CAROLYN: Ask how you can help Uncle Sam. War bonds are now on sale. Your purchase goes to help the war effort. And have a very Merry Christmas.

NARRATOR: We hope and pray that our brave American boys fighting overseas are able to manage a merry Christmas as best they can. And now on with the broadcast.

CHICK hits the xylophone with three distinct notes. The ENSEMBLE sings a few bars of "O Bless Ye Merry Gentlemen" and then continue to hum.

NARRATOR: As our story begins imagine that we have traveled back in time exactly one hundred years ago to the year 1843. The locale: London. You know this story already. It's Christmas Eve and the clock is ticking down in the late afternoon. On the doorway of that famous counting house reads in bold print: Scrooge and Marley. In wealth, the two men were equal, but in life the two men couldn't have been more different. We push open the door to begin our scene.

SFX: a door opening sound followed by thunder and rain.

ENSEMBLE #1: He was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.

ENSEMBLE #2: The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner.

ENSEMBLE #3: Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon change, for anything he chose to put his hand to.

ENSEMBLE #2: Ebenezer Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee.

ENSEMBLE #3: And his sole friend.

ENSEMBLE #5: Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the mournful event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnized it with an undoubted bargain.

ALL: Scrooge!

ENSEMBLE #1: A squeezing!

ENSEMBLE #2: Wrenching!

ENSEMBLE #3: Grasping!

ENSEMBLE #5: Scraping!

ENSEMBLE #1 & 2: Clutching!

ENSEMBLE #3 & 4: Covetous!

ALL: Old sinner!

ENSEMBLE #3: Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.

ENSEMBLE #6: The cold within him froze his old features—

ENSEMBLE #1: Nipped his pointed nose—

ENSEMBLE #2: Shriveled his cheek—

ENSEMBLE #3: Stiffened his gait.

ENSEMBLE #4: Made his eyes red—

ENSEMBLE #5: His thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice—

SCROOGE: Bah! Humbug!

ENSEMBLE #3: He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog days.

ENSEMBLE #4: External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge.

ENSEMBLE #6: No warmth could warm.

ENSEMBLE #2: No wintry weather chill him.

ENSEMBLE #3: No wind that blew was bitterer than he.

ENSEMBLE #6: No falling snow was more intent upon its purpose.

ENSEMBLE #2: No pelting rain less open to entreaty.

ENSEMBLE #1: Foul weather didn't know where to have him.

ALL: Once upon a time...

ENSEMBLE #1: Of all the good days in the year...

ENSEMBLE #2 & 4: On Christmas Eve...

ENSEMBLE #3: Old...

ALL: Scrooge...

ENSEMBLE #2: ...sat busy in his counting-house.

ENSEMBLE #5: Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

ENSEMBLE #6: Over the years the fire that had at once been at the center of Scrooge's heart...

ENSEMBLE #2: Had grown oh so dim.

ENSEMBLE #1: But the slight slip of the old man's translucent eyes were open.

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: They were always open.

CHICK holds a metronome up and we hear a few ticks.

NARRATOR: But now, the air is desperate for change for there is a fever in the atmosphere. Time seems to have stopped.

CHICK holds the metronome and it stops ticking.

NARRATOR: The grumpy, scowling old rascal, sits feverishly off to the side. On the other side of the room sits his only employee, the only man in all of London that could put up with the crusty scoundrel, Bob Cratchit. With one eye on Cratchit and the other scrolling through his ledger books, he counts his coins.

CHICK picks up a few coins and tosses them from one hand to the other.

NARRATOR: With just a tuft of tussled white hair Ebenezer gapes at the vestibules of life, opening and closing his once youthful eyes. His now transparent skin is stretched across a long and bony face. A pair of eyeglasses nestles at the precipice of his nose. His thin osteal hands grasp the counting desk as if it were his only friend. But now let's turn the hands of our clock backwards. To the man that was once Scrooge's friend and colleague. Jacob Marley.

The ENSEMBLE fades away from singing "O Bless Ye Merry Gentlemen" until CRATCHIT is the only one humming now in the "scene" with SCROOGE. SCROOGE turns to CRATCHIT.

SCROOGE: What is that sound?

CRATCHIT slowly stops humming.

CRATCHIT: Sorry sir. I thought it would liven the mood.

SCROOGE: What mood?

CRATCHIT: Well, it's just a little... cold in here sir. Wouldn't you say?

SCROOGE: Bah.

NARRATOR: Still chilled to the bone, Cratchit moves towards the front door, shivering, he puts on his pea coat.

SCROOGE: The hour is not yet upon us.

CRATCHIT: No sir. I was... just getting my coat.

SCROOGE: (*Going back to his paperwork.*) Hmmm.

CRATCHIT: It's quite cold.

SCROOGE: (*Pausing, and looking up.*) It's colder on the streets, than by the warmth of the fire.

Foley SFX: fire.

CRATCHIT: Sir... you have the fire.

SCROOGE: So, I do. But you have bricks, mortar, and a pen.

CRATCHIT: Sir?

SCROOGE: As the season draws close, think of your situation. Are not you at the advantage? Isn't that what you should be *thankful* for?

CRATCHIT: (*A ray of hope.*) Yes, of course, sir. Thank you sir.

SCROOGE: (*Going back to his counting.*) Hmmm.

Foley SFX: Door opening and wind blowing. Bell rings. SFX: Door shuts.

FRED: A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE: Close the door. You'll extinguish the fire!

FRED: The fire lives deep within our heart Uncle.

SCROOGE: Bah, Humbug!

FRED: Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don't mean that, I'm 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, Uncle. What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE: Bah, humbug!

FRED: Don't be cross, Uncle.

CRATCHIT: He's not cross. He's got the fire.

SCROOGE: What's that?

CRATCHIT: Nothing sir.

SCROOGE: (*Without looking up.*) Did you purchase that coat at Mr. Longstaff's?

CRATCHIT: No, sir.

SCROOGE: Because I did.

CRATCHIT: (*Sighing.*) Yes, sir.

FRED: Uncle, this is a time of good cheer and giving.

SCROOGE: (*Bitter.*) Giving? Bah! (*To himself.*) What else can I be, when I live in such a world of fools as this? (*To the others.*) Merry Christmas?! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; The pining of materials keeps us moving does it not? For it is not a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer? Is it not a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you?

FRED: (*Pleading.*) Uncle, please.

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

FRED: Keep it? But you don't keep it.

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

FRED: There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say. 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 the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it.

CRATCHIT applauds his enthusiasm.

SCROOGE: Hmmm. You're quite a powerful speaker. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

FRED: Come Uncle! You must dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE: Why?

FRED: Well, the food is delicious, the children would like to see you and—

SCROOGE: Why did you get married?

FRED: (*With a smile.*) Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE: Fell in love? *(He chuckles.)* That's the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a Merry Christmas.

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

SCROOGE: Good afternoon.

FRED: I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to the holiday, and I'll keep my humour to the last. So, a Merry Christmas, Uncle!

SCROOGE: Good afternoon, Nephew—

FRED: And a Happy New Year to you—

SCROOGE: *(Losing his patience as he mocks him.)* And a Happy New Year! Bah!

Beat.

FRED: I was speaking with Bob Cratchit.

SCROOGE: Oh.

BOB CRATCHIT: A happy and healthy merry Christmas to you Fred.

Foley SFX: Door opening, bell rings.

NARRATOR: And with that, his nephew leaves the slight room without an angry word. For the old miser did not immediately notice the two very kind and gentle individuals that were clearing the threshold.

CHARITY WORKER #1 and CHARITY WORKER #2 hum a few bars of "Joy to the World". They stop. Beat.

BOB CRATCHIT: Well good day.

CHARITY WORKER #2: And a good day to you young man.

SFX: Closing door.

CHARITY WORKER #1: *(Clearing his throat.)* Hmm, hmm hmmm.

SCROOGE: Yes?

CHARITY WORKER #2: Scrooge and Marleys' we presume?

SCROOGE: You presume too much.

CHARITY WORKER #1: We have always allowed ourselves the benefit of the doubt.

SCROOGE: I see London has given you a proper reading education.

CHARITY WORKER #1: Have we the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE: But I see that your propensity for history is somewhat lacking.

CHARITY WORKER #1: Sir?

SCROOGE: Mr. Marley... Has been dead these seven years.

CHARITY WORKER #2: Our condolences, sir. We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner.

SCROOGE: Hmmm.

CHARITY WORKER #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?

CHARITY WORKER #2: Plenty of prisons.

SCROOGE: And the union workhouses. Are they still in operation?

CHARITY WORKER #1: I wish I could say they were not.

SCROOGE: I'm very glad to hear it.

CHARITY WORKER #2: Mr. Scrooge, a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink and means of warmth.

CHARITY WORKER #1: Obviously, we choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when want is keenly felt, and abundance rejoices. So, at this time we ask that you open your heart and find what is inside.

CHARITY WORKER #2: So, what shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE: Nothing.

Beat.

CHARITY WORKER #1: *(Thinking that he understands.)* Oh! You wish to be anonymous!

SCROOGE: I wish to be left alone!

CHARITY WORKER #2: But, sir.

SCROOGE: Since you ask me what I wish, 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.

CHARITY WORKER #2: 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.

CHARITY WORKER #1: Do you understand what you are saying, Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: (*Interrupting.*) I understand that it is not my business. It's enough for one man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon!

NARRATOR: With hardly a bit to his name Bob Cratchit pulls out of his pocket a small sliver of silver and drops that in their charity.

Foley SFX: Coin dropping into a can.

CHARITY WORKER #1: (*To CRATCHIT.*) God bless you.

CHARITY WORKER #2: And a merry Christmas to you kind sir.

BOB CRATCHIT: Merry Christmas.

Foley SFX: Door opening, bell, wind blowing. Door closes.

NARRATOR: And with that... our kind hearted charity workers are gone. And old Scrooge could not be more pleased. Or so one would think.

SCROOGE: Is that what you do with the raise I give you?

CRATCHIT: Sir... You've never given me a raise.

SCROOGE: (*Goes back to his accounting.*) Hmmm.

The ensemble sings or hums "God Bless You Merry Gentlemen" while NARRATOR narrates the scene change.

NARRATOR: The sun was beginning to set upon our characters in the great old city of London. If one was to look outside the windows of the counting house one could see in the main street at the corner of the court, some labourers repairing the gas-pipes. There was a great lighted fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. And all the while sat Bob Cratchit, upon his stool, readying for the hour to strike.

The Ensemble stops singing. Foley SFX: Clock striking five.

BOB CRATCHIT: It's five o'clock sir.

SCROOGE: Not according to my clock.

BOB CRATCHIT: The town clock is never wrong.

SCROOGE: Are you calling me a liar?

CRATCHIT: No, sir. But I might have hoped that you would find it in your heart to let me off work a little bit early.

SCROOGE: Why?

CRATCHIT: *(With a smile on his face.)* Well sir, isn't it obvious?

SCROOGE: The only thing that is obvious to me young man is that this deposit is made. Bah! Where is the Adams list? And the Morris papers?

CRATCHIT: They are in the drawer sir.

SCROOGE: Hmmm.

Foley SFX: Sound of drawers being opened and shut.

BOB CRATCHIT: Sir, it is nearly two past the hour. And tomorrow is... well. It's the merriest day in the all the year. The ray of light, with old Saint Nic and feelings of mirth, that most glorious day know as—

SCROOGE: Don't say it!

BOB CRATCHIT: Sorry sir.

SCROOGE: I suppose you'll want the whole day tomorrow?

CRATCHIT: *(Radiant.)* If it's convenient, sir.

SCROOGE: It is *not* convenient.

CRATCHIT: It *is* Christmas, sir.

SCROOGE: Bah! A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!

CRATCHIT: Yes, sir.

SCROOGE: Yes, well... *(A tense lull.)* Be here all the earlier next morning.

CRATCHIT: As early as can be sir. And thank you sir! *(Overcome with joy.)* A merry— *(He stops. Composes himself.)* Good night sir.

SCROOGE: Hmmm.

Foley SFX: Door opening, bell, sound of wind, door closing.

NARRATOR: And with that... Scrooge was alone.

Foley SFX: Clock ticking.

SCROOGE: Humbug!

The ensemble hums "Silent Night". After a few bars, the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR: Scrooge walked through the barren streets.

Foley SFX: Feet walking.

NARRATOR: The sun had already set and the candles cast silhouettes along the roadways. The horses, the houses, the people were quiet. The path home was illuminated in a sense of good cheer, but Scrooge would have none of it. Scrooge lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner, Mr. Marley.

The ENSEMBLE stops "Silent Night". Low, ominous music plays.

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

SCROOGE: *(Brushing the thought aside.)* Bah! Humbug!

NARRATOR: Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker...

Foley SFX: Door knocks three times.

NARRATOR: And there, illuminated within the frame of that knocker was the face of...

SCROOGE: *(Curious.)* Jacob?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: *(Ghost like but very soft.)* Ohhhhhhhh.

SCROOGE: *(In a whisper and in awe.)* Jacob Marley?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: *(In a whisper.)* Scrooooooge.

SCROOGE: No.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: *(Louder.)* Scrooooooge!

SCROOGE: No!

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST & ENSEMBLE: SCROOOOOOGE!

SCROOGE: *(Closing his eyes.)* NO!

Music stops. SCROOGE shuts his eyes. Beat. Silence. MARLEY is gone.

NARRATOR: But there is nothing there, only the bone chilling cold and the sound of the wind.

Foley SFX: a light wind.

SCROOGE: *(Recovering.)* Humbug.

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: *(In a whisper.)* Humbug.

NARRATOR: Scrooge puts the rusty key in the lock.

Foley SFX: Key opening a lock.

NARRATOR: And opens the door.

Foley SFX: A large door opening and creaking.

NARRATOR: Scrooge enters the abode. And like a great gust of wind the massive door slams.

Foley SFX: Door slam.

SCROOGE: Oh! (*Beat.*) Just the wind.

NARRATOR: But there was no wind on that Christmas Eve.

SCROOGE: Bah!

NARRATOR: He sets off up the stairs to his bedroom.

Foley SFX: climbing the stairs

NARRATOR: With each footstep the hairs on the back of the old man's neck began to rise. Finally he enters his bedroom.

Foley SFX: Another door opening, very slowly. Now the door slams.

SCROOGE: Wha...?

NARRATOR: He does not believe in ghosts or spirits. Dead is dead.
As dead as the old miser's heart. But then...

Foley SFX: footsteps.

NARRATOR: Footsteps. And... something else.

Foley SFX: chains dragging on the floor

NARRATOR: Scrooge hears it.

ENSEMBLE #1: Knows it.

ENSEMBLE #2: He feels it!

SCROOGE: Who's there?!

ENSEMBLE #3: He cries out.

SCROOGE: Who's in my home?! If you care to burgle me then be on your way!

NARRATOR: But the sound doesn't stop. In fact it's getting...

ENSEMBLE #3 & 4: Closer. And...

ENSEMBLE #2 & 5: Closer!

NARRATOR: Scrooge closes his eyes.

SCROOGE: Ahhh!

NARRATOR: And the sound is... gone. And then...

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: (*Off stage, in a loud whisper, barely audible.*) Scrooooooge.

SCROOGE: No! No. It isn't real. It isn't real!

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST & ENSEMBLE: Scrooooooge!

Foley SFX: The chains are getting louder now.

SCROOGE: Mrs. Dilber!

MRS. DILBER: (*With a Cockney accent.*) Alright, alright, keep your hair on. I heard you the first time.

NARRATOR: Mrs. Dilber, his maid is holding a hot cup of tea.

MRS. DILBER: Here ya go Mr. Scrooge. I thought it might settle your nerves.

SCROOGE: Did you hear that?

MRS. DILBER: I didn't hear a sound.

SCROOGE: What are you deaf?

MRS. DILBER: Mr. Scrooge, I will forget that insult for now. And pretend that I did not hear you talking to a lady. Insulting a woman is unbecoming. Even for you.

SCROOGE: Hmmm.

MRS. DILBER: Now, would you like your tea?

SCROOGE: Um... Yes. Just leave it.

MRS. DILBER: As you wish.

Foley SFX: A tea cup placed on a table.

MRS. DILBER: Oh, and Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Yes?

MRS. DILBER: Merry Christmas.

Foley SFX: Door gently closing.

SCROOGE: Sounds. Spirits. Apparitions. Bah! Humbug!

NARRATOR: The window is slightly ajar. Scrooge stands and moves towards it then quickly shuts it.

Foley SFX: Window closing.

NARRATOR: And locks the window tight!

Foley SFX: Window locks.

NARRATOR: And now he is alone. Or so he thinks. For behind the window curtain there is a...

ENSEMBLE #3: Rasping!

ENSEMBLE #4: Wheezing!

ENSEMBLE #2: Breathing!

NORMAN breathes heavy.

SCROOGE: Am I not alone?

NARRATOR: But he is not alone. For the breathing is getting louder and more intense.

NORMAN breathes heavier and fast now.

NARRATOR: Slowly Ebenezer pulls aside the curtain to reveal...

SFX: Curtain being drawn. Dramatic music tag.

SCROOGE: Nothing. Bah!

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: SCROOGE!

SCROOGE shrieks! Live music tag.

NARRATOR: Don't touch that dial! We'll be right back after a message from our sponsor.

Foley SFX: Xylophone jingle

CAROLYN: Fulger's Coffee is so delicious. It's the perfect start to your day.

NORMAN: *(Bucolic and innocent.)* Honey! Is breakfast ready? I'm nearly late for the office.

ESTHER: *(Bucolic and innocent.)* Don't worry dear, your ham and eggs are on the table along with a fresh cup of coffee.

NORMAN: Fulger's coffee I hope?

ESTHER: What else?

CAROLYN: Fulger's. Good to the last sip.

A commercial jingle tag.

COMMERCIAL SINGERS:

WHEN YOUR CUP IS EMPTY AND READY TO TIP

IT'S FULGER'S GOODNESS TO THE VERY LAST SIP

Commercial jingle wraps.

NARRATOR: And now back to our program. When last we left Ebenezer Scrooge he had just encountered a ghostly spirit!

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: SCROOGE!

SCROOGE: (*Closing his eyes.*) No! I won't believe it. No, no, no! What do you want with me? (*No answer.*) Who are you?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Ask me who I was.

Sound of MARLEY breathing.

SCROOGE: Who were you then?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: In life, I was your partner... Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE: (*In a whisper.*) Mercy.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me?

SCROOGE: Before I answer, dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: 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—Ohhhh!

Foley SFX: Chains rattling.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Then witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!

SCROOGE: You are fettered. Tell me why?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: 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. I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?

SCROOGE: I...

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: 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: Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house—mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me.

SCROOGE: You must have been very slow about it, Jacob. Seven years dead and travelling all the time.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST lets out a painful cry. The ENSEMBLE follows with ghostly sounds. Foley SFX: Chains rattling and ghostly sounds.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Oh! Captive, bound, and double-ironed. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I!

SCROOGE: I don't understand. You were always a good man of business, Jacob.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: 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, of *our* trade Ebenezer, were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business.

SCROOGE: (*Most frightened.*) Why are you here?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: 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.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Remember. *(Beat.)* Remember.

SCROOGE: Remember? Remember—

*JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST and the ENSEMBLE shriek with pain.
Foley SFX: Chains rattling.*

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: The first is burning. As it burned my flesh in life, let it not burn you.

SCROOGE: What do you mean? The first? The first what? Marley—

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

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

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: It is.

Beat.

SCROOGE: I think I'd rather not.

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one.

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

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Expect the second and a third. And look to see me no more. And Ebenezer?

SCROOGE: Yes?

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: Remember what has passed between us! Remember.

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: Remember!

JACOB MARLEY'S GHOST: *(Whispering.)* Remember!

SCROOGE: Remember.

NARRATOR: Just then, the candles are extinguished by a strong wind!

Foley SFX: The sound of strong wind and the chiming of a chandelier.

SCROOGE: No. NOOOOOO!

Foley SFX: City clock striking one.

NARRATOR: With a bolt Scrooge awakens... from his bed.

SCROOGE: What? Ahhh... a dream. Only a dream. Yes, of course.
What a thing to believe in. Ghostly apparitions. Bah! Humbug! This is my room, this is my home and—

We hear the sound of the city clock going a little haywire. It quickly ticks six, then rings eight with broken sounds, and then a very clear and strong one.

SCROOGE: Crazy clock. An icicle must have got in the works.

NARRATOR: Scrooge slowly opens the shutters to the stillness of the Christmas night.

SCROOGE: It's not cold. Not a nip on my nose. No chill at all.

NARRATOR: And with that, Scrooge blows out the candle.

Foley SFX: Blowing out a candle.

NARRATOR: And crawls back into the safety and comfort of his bed.

SCROOGE: *(Content.)* Ahhhh.

NARRATOR: And then... an eerie green light. It is glowing and strong. At first Ebenezer doesn't notice but then that amber beacon begins to pulsate over and over again. From beneath the bedding emerges... *(Music tag.)* a young child with a mysterious face. For he is the owner of a pleasant grin and a full set of teeth. Unassuming, rosy cheeked and dressed like a new born babe ready for the churchyard the child emerges and sits at the end of his bed post.

SCROOGE *laughs.*

SCROOGE: *(Recovering from his laughter.)* Pardon me young master, but... 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 foolishness is this?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Rise from your slumber. And walk with me.

NARRATOR: The ghostly cherub raises his hand like a puppet master and Scrooge follows.

SCROOGE: How can you—

NARRATOR: With this, the ghost now holds control of Ebenezer as the balcony windows fly open with great aplomb!

Foley SFX: Windows flying open and wind.

SCROOGE: How? Gazooks! Child, oh child, young man, oh ghost, please stop.... STOP!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Why do you wish to stop, sir?

SCROOGE: Yes, for you see. I am wary of tall structures.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: But you live like a prince in a parapet.

SCROOGE: (*Ironically*) I live on meager means.

NARRATOR: And there they stood. At the edge of the window three stories to the Earth below.

SCROOGE: How do you walk, oh spirit?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Amongst the clouds. Join me.

SCROOGE: That could be difficult. (*Beat.*) I am mortal. And liable to fall.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Words that at one time you had taken to heart.

SCROOGE: How do you mean?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Bear a touch of my hand and you shall be upheld in more than this.

NARRATOR: Scrooge slowly stretches out until he barely touches the tips of the young boy's fingers. And then!

Foley SFX: Magic!

NARRATOR: The room transforms all around them. The wind, the lights. Time and space intersect for they are now hovering above the floor. Scrooge feels a lightness in his hands, his head, his eyes, his feet.

SCROOGE: Oh spirit! We are flying!

The ENTIRE ENSEMBLE hums a somber version of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" as the sounds of the Foley artist continue.

NARRATOR: Now they move along the old roads where Ebenezer had been a boy. He recognizes every gate, and post, and every tree. Children running along the roadways like little specks.

SCROOGE: I can see them! I see them spirit! The whole lot of them going to church on a Christmas day, now long remembered. How young I was. It all seems... so real.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: These are but shadows of the things that have been.

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" stops.

NARRATOR: Spirit and mortal find that time and space has transformed into an old school room. Like a bird on a branch the ghost and elderly Scrooge watch a very *young* Scrooge enter the school room with his nose between the pages.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: The school is not quite deserted.

SCROOGE: I used to devour so many books. Hours upon hours after school I would read such wonderful stories. I could transport myself to distant lands and wonderful adventures.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: A solitary child, neglected by his friends you would read because...

SCROOGE: I was alone.

NARRATOR: Scrooge's older sister, Fan, enters to find a solitary Ebenezer for all the children have gone.

FAN: There you are brother. What is it that you are doing?

VERY YOUNG SCROOGE: Reading. Wonderful stories Fan. They are all so wonderful!

FAN: Oh Ebenezer, you're such the little romantic! But I have come to bring you home, dear brother. It is time. Come.

VERY YOUNG SCROOGE: Home, Fan?

FAN: *(With much cheer.)* Yes! Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed. He sent me. And you're 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!

NARRATOR: The siblings look at each other with warm affection. Fan, the elder, always protective of the thin, wheezing and frail Ebenezer puts a hand on his bony shoulder.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. She loved you very much, as only a sister can.

VERY YOUNG SCROOGE and SCROOGE: “Never close your lips to those whom you have already opened your heart.”

NARRATOR: Fan and Young Ebenezer embrace as if the world were against them. And then...

SCROOGE: She was gone.

Foley SFX: Magic.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: She died a woman, but not before she bore children.

SCROOGE: One child.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Your nephew.

SCROOGE: Yes. I see where Fred finds his good mirth. His mother was always smiling.

Music.

SCROOGE: Ghost, where are we traveling to now?

NARRATOR: But the Ghost of Christmas Past simply smiles as the room swirls and changes before their eyes.

Foley SFX: Metronome.

NARRATOR: Further and further through the clouds, through time and space they fly until they land in a locale that looks very familiar.

There is a loud cry of laughter from the ENTIRE ENSEMBLE. CAROLYN plays “Sir Roger De Coverly” on the piano or a fiddle, whatever instrument the production chooses.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Do you know where we are?

SCROOGE: I know this place. The walls of timber. The low ceilings. This is where I was apprenticed! My goodness! I must have been seventeen or eighteen years old. And there he is! Old Fezziwig. *(Beside himself with joy and laughter.)* Old Fezziwig! Bless his heart, he's alive again!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Is there pure and lovely joy in this space?

SCROOGE: Oh spirit, like none I had ever encountered in all my days.

The ENTIRE ENSEMBLE improvises and makes merry for a few moments to set the mood. After a while, as if someone had told a joke the entire ensemble erupts in laughter.

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: Hahahahaha!

FEZZIWIG: Yo ho, there Ebenezer!

YOUNG SCROOGE and SCROOGE: Yes?

SCROOGE catches himself.

FEZZIWIG: No more work tonight. Christmas Eve. Let's have the shutters up, before a man can say Jack Robinson.

FEZZIWIG laughs.

FEZZIWIG: Well, don't just stand there young man, clear it all away! This is a party, is it not!

YOUNG SCROOGE: Oh yes sir! Yes it is!

More laughter from the ENSEMBLE as the live music continues.

SCROOGE: My lord! There's Mrs. Fezziwig. And Jack and his sister. And Michael, my co-worker. And there's the baker, who I cannot remember his name, but I do remember his cousin, Mildred. They're here. And there's Dick and his wife and Frank and his children, and Mr. Oleander. He used to give us sweeties every New Year. And the neighbors and the workers from across the street with whom Fezziwig was always at odds, but they are here now all tied together

like a package with mirth. They're all here; every one of them including...

SCROOGE and YOUNG SCROOGE: Belle.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: You remember?

SCROOGE: How could I ever forget her.

NARRATOR: There was Belle glowing in a brilliant dress, her radiance emanating from her finely sculpted cheek bones, her curly yellow hair and the sweetest smile one could imagine.

SCROOGE: She's just as beautiful as I remember. Poise. Intelligence. Belle.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Belle?

BELLE: Yes?

YOUNG SCROOGE: You look quite.... Uh... beautiful.

BELLE: (*Enraptured.*) Thank you Ebenezer. You're looking quite dapper yourself this evening. I have a secret to ask of you?

YOUNG SCROOGE: A secret?

BELLE: Yes.

YOUNG SCROOGE: What is it?

BELLE: Can you... move?

YOUNG SCROOGE: Move?

BELLE: Yes! Come with me Ebenezer, let's move!

The ENTIRE ENSEMBLE begins to clap to the music with more laughing and cheering.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: I believe that you danced Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE: (*Still in awe of the scene.*) Yes.... Yes, I did. For hours and hours. It was so... magical.

"Sir Roger De Coverly" continues. SCROOGE even claps along remembering the joy and the music. After a while the music ends. EVERYONE claps and cheers.

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Alright, alright now! Let's catch our breath before the feast!

The music picks up again. Another song.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: And it was here, in this moment that it happens. Do you remember?

SCROOGE: Every moment.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Could we stop the music. Uh.... Please.... Stop the music.

The music stops.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Thank you.

NARRATOR: For the younger version of Ebenezer Scrooge can only imagine his entire life ahead of him, while the elder Ebenezer Scrooge watches on with trepidation. And here the young version of himself goes down on one knee and pulls out a small but sparkling diamond ring. The crowd hushes.

The ENSEMBLE whispers with anticipation.

YOUNG SCROOGE: (*Struggling with his words.*) Belle... You are.... Well.... It's not a very expensive ring but you fill my life with.... What I mean to say is... I... well... will you...

BELLE: Yes!

YOUNG SCROOGE: Yes?

BELLE: Yes!

The ENSEMBLE cheers.

FEZZIWIG: Congratulations Ebenezer!

MRS. FEZZIWIG: And to you my dear.

FEZZIWIG: May all your days be remembered! This Christmas party has now turned into an engagement celebration! So, let the festivities continue!

MRS. FEZZIWIG: Come on everyone, let's celebrate!

The ENSEMBLE cheers.

NARRATOR: Through the parade of happiness a very young Ebenezer Scrooge and a very beautiful young Belle share a kiss.

The music is very low.

SCROOGE: It's all just as I remembered. All of it. So much cheer and mirth. And Fezziwig was such a wonderful, heartfelt man. Everyone loved him.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: A small matter to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE: Small?!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Fezziwig has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

SCROOGE: (*Sounding like his young self.*) It isn't that, Spirit. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count them up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost... if it cost a fortune.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Perhaps it is all for naught.

The cheerfulness and the music abruptly end. SCROOGE looks off longingly. It is now cold. A single sad musical note plays.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: What is the matter?

SCROOGE: Nothing in particular.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Something I should think.

SCROOGE: I should like to be able to say a word or two to Fezzwig, just now. That's all. And Belle. Well, she...

NARRATOR: Scrooge gazes with sorrowful eyes at his former wife. The love that he once had for her, the feelings of joy and mirth. They are re-surfacing once again.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: My time grows short. As does yours.

NARRATOR: And with that the world transforms into a whirl of lights and sound.

Foley SFX: Magic.

NARRATOR: The Ghost of Christmas Past closes his eyes as he and Scrooge push forward. We are now in the very counting house where Scrooge sits today. Belle and Ebenezer have been married

for only a few years, but Scrooge's eyelids have begun to sag, and his pupils begin a myopic vision that is leading down a dangerous path. All the while Belle's heart is slowly beginning to splinter.

Foley SFX: The sound of coins dropping into a box.

SCROOGE: Counting.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Each coin is a minute that you let slip past the one that you once cherished in your heart.

SCROOGE: What do you...

BELLE: It matters little to you Ebenezer!

YOUNG SCROOGE: It matters.

BELLE: To you, very little.

YOUNG SCROOGE: How can you say such things?

BELLE: For 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.

Foley SFX: He drops coins into the box.

YOUNG SCROOGE: What idol has displaced you?

BELLE: A golden one.

He stops dropping coins into the box.

YOUNG 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.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Bah!

BELLE: All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, and gain engrosses you. Have I not?

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

BELLE: But you have. 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.

SCROOGE: (*Impatiently.*) I was a boy.

BELLE: Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Have I ever sought release?

BELLE: In words? No. Never.

YOUNG SCROOGE: In what, then?

BELLE: In a changed nature. (*Beat.*) Tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now?

NARRATOR: And here there is a deadly silence. A subtext of something so great that it fills the wooden walls of the counting house with a propensity of anguish.

BELLE: No.

YOUNG SCROOGE: You think not?

BELLE: I would gladly think otherwise if I could. Heaven knows. When I have learned a truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free 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. (*Beat.*) That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. It is enough that I have thought of it, and so... I release you.

SCROOGE: Belle—

BELLE: The memory of what is past makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. And this is a symbol that I return to you.

Foley SFX: A twinkling sound.

YOUNG SCROOGE: You may keep your wedding ring. It was my gift.

BELLE: You don't understand Ebenezer. I don't want it. I don't want you.

YOUNG SCROOGE: And how will you live?

BELLE: The world will take care of me. It has for many years since I lost you.

YOUNG SCROOGE: You haven't lost me Belle.

BELLE: No. You've lost yourself. *(Beat.)* May you be happy in the life you have chosen.

NARRATOR: And with that... she is gone.

SCROOGE and YOUNG SCROOGE: Belle.

Foley SFX: Door opening and then slamming shut.

SCROOGE: Wait!

NARRATOR: Both elder Scrooge and younger Scrooge stand there in shock. The younger version of our anti-hero holds up the diamond ring that he cuffed on his bride so many years ago at Fezziwig's party. The elder Scrooge walks up to him and attempts to touch him on the shoulder. But like an apparition his hand passes right through him.

Foley SFX: Magic.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: You cannot interfere and you cannot change the past. We are only here as visions, spirits that can visit those events long since gone and in kind fondly remember them.

SCROOGE: Fondly remember?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Yes.

SCROOGE: Spirit... am I dead?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: Your heart is the only key that can unlock that question.

NARRATOR: The elder Scrooge steps back and watches his younger self.

SCROOGE: No... No.

NARRATOR: The younger Scrooge slowly walks over to the accounting box and drops the diamond into the coin box.

Foley SFX: Diamond dropping into a box. SCROOGE is saddened.

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

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST: One more shadow.

SCROOGE: No! I don't wish to see it. Show me no more! Remove me from this place. Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer! No more! No more!

The ENSEMBLE makes a loud burst of "ghost sounds." Foley SFX: A cacophony of sounds. HARRY "conducts" the ghost sounds until they stop. Music tag.

NARRATOR: It's now time for intermission! But don't turn that dial. We'll return to *A Christmas Carol* after this message from our sponsor!

The main power cuts out for a moment as the lights flicker. The actors cut character.

NORMAN: What was that?

HARRY: The power. The generator just kicked in.

ESTHER: The main power on the street is out.

NORMAN: Are we going to continue the broadcast?

There is a little pause.

ESTHER: I say yes. Come on everyone, we're the Liberty Station Players and we have an obligation to keep those folks at home listening.

CAROLYN: But what if the power is out. It looks dark out there.

HARRY: I don't mind staying.

ESTHER: It's probably not the entire town. It may just be our block. What do you say?

CAROLYN: It's cold out there.

ESTHER: I say we stay. Can we Mom?

CAROLYN: Well...

NORMAN: If Esther is staying then we're staying.

DOUGLAS: And besides the show must...

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE: Go on!

HARRY: Alright then give me a few moments and we'll be right back on the air. Take a bathroom break and grab a cookie. Be back here after intermission.

Music. The cast improvises while the lights fade.

END OF ACT ONE

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ACT TWO

The lights are up and the cast is already assembled. Canned music is playing and the cast is taking sips of coffee and improvising just like at the top of the show.

HARRY: Ten seconds!

NORMAN: Snow is coming down much harder now.

IAN: I'm not sure we can go anywhere even if we wanted to.

CHICK: It's a hard Christmas this year. I hope your brother is alright, Carolyn.

CAROLYN: Thank you for your thoughts, Chick.

CHICK: Of course.

HARRY: Here we go everyone. In five, four, three...

He mouths "Two and one," and points to IAN.

NARRATOR: And welcome back listeners to the Liberty Station Player's production of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* brought to you by Tidal Laundry Detergent.

ESTHER: A tidal wave of clean clothes makes our entire house smell as fresh as an ocean breeze!

NARRATOR: Tidal Laundry Detergent. Purchase wherever laundry detergent is sold. And Frigidaire appliances.

The ENSEMBLE hums a little jingle.

ENTIRE ENSEMBLE:

FRIGIDAIRE!

Foley SFX: a door chime.

SALESMAN: Good day to you.

HUSBAND: Good day.

SALESMAN: May I help you?

WIFE: We're looking for a new refrigerator.

SALESMAN: Refrigerator you say?

HUSBAND: Yes. My wife is an excellent cook and I want to ensure that she always has the freshest ingredients on hand.

WIFE: But we always want to be able to store our meals for later.

SALESMAN: She looks like a pleasant purist in the kitchen alright. I think I have the perfect combination for you. The new Frigidaire 600 refrigerator. Stainless steel construction keeps lemonade chilled and pot roast ready for cooking while storing all of your leftovers for the next evening's meal.

HUSBAND: Sounds great!

WIFE: Now that's really *cool* to me!

Foley SFX: Commercial jingle. CAROLYN plays a little commercial jingle on the piano.

COMMERCIAL SINGERS:

KEEP YOUR MEALS FRESH EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR,
EVERY TIME SHE COOKS SHE'LL HEAR THAT CHEER!
FRIGIDAIRE!

NARRATOR: Frigidaire cooling units are available where ever fine appliances are sold. And now, back to our program, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. (*Beat.*) When we last left Ebenezer Scrooge, The Ghost of Christmas Past had shown him his childhood, but now Scrooge wakes up from his bedroom, alone. Or so he thinks.

Foley SFX: Sound of a clock striking. SCROOGE wakes up with a fright.

SCROOGE: What? Where? How?! Visions?! Spirits?! Oh... (*Calming down.*) It must have been a dream. Simply a dream! (*Beat.*) Another hour until Christmas. Christmas. Bah. I'll just lock these doors again to be safe.

Foley SFX: Sounds of a padlock and chain.

SCROOGE: There. All alone now. No one here. Spirits? Apparitions? On Christmas? Bah! Humbug!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: (*Mocking and with a booming voice.*) Bah! Humbug!

SCROOGE: (*Startled.*) Ahhh!

Foley SFX: A door creaks open.

NARRATOR: With the creak of the door The Ghost of Christmas Present enters from the balcony. He is large man, nearly as big as the jolly guy himself dressed in a large green robe with white fur and gold laurel about his head. He holds a cheery disposition about his person. His eyes twinkle with joy. His ruddy red cheeks are little pillows on each side of his face.

SCROOGE: I just locked those doors.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT laughs.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: I am the Ghost of Christmas Present!

SCROOGE: I gathered that. A little tardy aren't you?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: You have never seen the like of me before?

SCROOGE: I think I would have remembered you.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Take hold of my robe.

SCROOGE: Am I sure I am not asleep? I could be...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Come, Ebenezer. Take hold of my robe.

SCROOGE: Oh...

NARRATOR: Slowly the old man creeps towards The Ghost of Christmas Present. Towards the warmth, the cheer, the plianthood of the great spirit. And then... Scrooge touches the edge of the green robe and away they go!

Foley SFX: Flying. Music. The ENSEMBLE hums "Good King Wenceslas". After a few bars or so they hum it as the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR: And away they went. Ebenezer Scrooge flies through the streets of London and oh what a sight! The sky is gloomy, and

the shortest streets are choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in a shower of sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire. Lonely people everywhere glance demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. The shopkeepers' stores are filled with pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed. They soar through the city with rapid pace flying through steeples as they brush elbows with the innumerable people flocking through the streets with the finest of faces, grinning from ear to ear, wearing their best for they know Christmas was upon them. London bakeries permeate the aroma of fresh bread and buttered yams. Down below across the high heavy fog, the shop windows shine with a kaleidoscope of colors of candied fruit. The butchers hang their pigs and geese upon the hooks, and all was as life should be on Christmas Day. But for Mr. Scrooge, his heavenly journey ends at a most peculiar structure.

The ENSEMBLE stops humming. Foley SFX: Sound of distant wind.

NARRATOR: It is a very cold night at the home of Scrooge's single employee, Bob Cratchit. The Ghost and Scrooge magically sift through the walls of the abode and gently land in the home of Scrooge's sole employee. From his pocket the Ghost takes out some magic dust and sprinkles it amongst the scene.

Foley SFX: Sprinkling effect.

SCROOGE: Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: To any kindly given. But to a poor one most.

SCROOGE: Why to a poor one most?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Because it needs it most.

NARRATOR: And as if on cue, Mrs. Cratchit, Bob's lovely wife enters carrying scraps of bread and soup.

SCROOGE: Who's this?

MRS. CRATCHIT: Children, on the table now. Place the food on the table my chickens.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: This is the wife of your employee, Bob Cratchit.

SCROOGE: And who are these two youths?

MARTHA CRATCHIT: Here, Mother?

MRS. CRATCHIT: That's fine, love. Peter, on the end there.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Martha Cratchit, the couple's oldest daughter.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: There are only a few slices of bread here.

MRS. CRATCHIT: It'll be enough.

PETER CRATCHIT: Is this correct mother?

MRS. CRATCHIT: Yes dear, right there.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: And that is Peter, their oldest son. Surely you have met them.

SCROOGE: No. *(Beat.)* No, spirit, I have never met Bob's wife or his children.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Never? In all the years of employment you have not once laid eyes upon these mortals?

SCROOGE: I must unfortunately say that I have not.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Now, what has got your precious father then? We've got all of this food.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: There's not that much food, Mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT: There's enough. And we thank the lord that we are fortunate for this.

PETER CRATCHIT: We make do.

MRS. CRATCHIT: That's the spirit Peter. Your father has never let us down now has he?

PETER CRATCHIT and MARTHA CRATCHIT: No, Mother.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Then there we are. The day is getting long. Where could he be? My lord!

PETER: *(Looking out the window.)* Mother they're coming! Father and Tiny Tim. They're coming! I see them out the window! They're coming!

MRS. CRATCHIT: Right then. Ohhhh! Come now children! *(With a spirit of fun.)* Let's everybody have a bit of fun and hide!

MARTHA CRATCHIT: A game of hide and seek!

PETER CRATCHIT: Right oh!

There is a general sound of scurrying as they all hide. Foley SFX: Door opening and shutting. TINY TIM is singing "Away in a Manger". He stops.

BOB CRATCHIT: Now, now, where did everybody go?

TINY TIM: Maybe they're hiding.

SCROOGE: *(To himself.)* Bob Cratchit.

EVERYONE jumps out with a big loud noise! Laughs all around.

BOB CRATCHIT: Goodness me! Children you scared me half to death.

Tim, were you scared?

TINY TIM: Not in your life! I'm a beast!

He growls.

BOB CRATCHIT: Yes, you are my son. Yes, you are.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Hello, my dear.

BOB CRATCHIT: Hello wife.

NARRATOR: A quick kiss between husband and wife.

MRS. CRATCHIT: The table is ready and it's time to eat! Martha over there. Peter on that side and Tim, sit at the end.

Foley SFX: The hustle and bustle of the dining table, plates shifting, silverware, etc...

MARTHA CRATCHIT: I'll help him.

TINY TIM: I don't need any help, thank you.

SCROOGE: He's so small. Scrawny. Like a tiny bird with a clipped wing.

MRS. CRATCHIT: You heard your brother. He's as fit as an ox. Isn't that right, Tim?

TINY TIM: That's right Mother.

TINY TIM makes a big growl.

MRS. CRATCHIT: That's a good lad. *(To MARTHA.)* Martha dear, I thought you would never come.

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

MRS. CRATCHIT: Work, work, work.

SCROOGE: Reasonable woman.

TINY TIM: Father, look at all the food!

BOB CRATCHIT: If you can beat me in thumbs you can eat the whole bunch!

TINY TIM: I'll take that bet.

BOB CRATCHIT: Ready?

TINY TIM: READY!

BOB CRATCHIT: GO!

NARRATOR: Father and son play a game of thumbs as the family laughs about. Bob lets his youngest son finally win realizing that it's one of the few things in his life that he might be able to be champion of.

TINY TIM: I win! I win! I get seconds!

TINY TIM coughs.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Tim...

PETER CRATCHIT: Tim are you alright?

BOB CRATCHIT: Be strong son.

TINY TIM: I'm alright, Father.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Well my son, it looks like you have all the food in front you. How do you feel about that?

NARRATOR: Plates of food are in front of Tiny Tim. It is a meager feast but it makes the youngest member of the Cratchit family feel like a king.

BOB CRATCHIT: And now that you have all the food my son, what are you going to do with it?

TINY TIM: I'm going to share it with everyone I know, so that nobody will ever go hungry.

BOB CRATCHIT: Well said Tim, well said!

PETER CRATCHIT: I want some stuffing! Give me a helping Tim.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: Me too! The goose is nearly cooked.

PETER CRATCHIT: I want to see! I want to see!

TINY TIM: I want to see too, Father.

BOB CRATCHIT: Very well.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Children, help Tim.

TINY TIM: I'm alright. Mother says I'm as strong as an ox.

BOB CRATCHIT: (*Staring after TINY TIM.*) And that you are my son.
That you are.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Alright children, into the kitchen to look at the goose!

NARRATOR: The children push and shove each other as they all race into the kitchen. Tiny Tim is last.

We hear the sounds of the children running off into the kitchen. We can hear TINY TIM coughing as he exits.

MRS. CRATCHIT: And how did little Tim behave?

BOB 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.

MRS. CRATCHIT: (*Her voice trembling with anguish.*) The illness is ravishing him.

BOB CRATCHIT: Now don't say things like that.

MRS. CRATCHIT: We don't have the money for the doctor.

BOB CRATCHIT: He's getting stronger by the day. Tiny Tim is indomitable. And we must be strong as well.

MRS. CRATCHIT: He'll never walk normally again.

BOB CRATCHIT: And what is normal?

MRS. CRATCHIT: (*Recovering and looking at him with love.*) Well said my husband, well said. But, the world will not treat him with equality. They'll mock him. Tease him.

BOB CRATCHIT: There are so many things worth living for in this world. The sky, the moon, the earth, and most of all: family.

NARRATOR: Husband and wife embrace. Scrooge walks up to them. Through his eyes he feels their compassion, their strength, their love for not only one another but for their family.

SCROOGE: Spirit, I—

The children enter with a ruckus.

PETER CRATCHIT: It's incredible.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: That goose is as big as a barn!

MARTHA CRATCHIT: I'm going to have seconds. And then thirds.

MRS. CRATCHIT: No need to be greedy.

SCROOGE: Spirit, that goose is very... very small. It can barely feed this entire family.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: It is all that they can afford.

SCROOGE: But surely Bob's paycheck...

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: This world is compassionate, yet relies on the brick and mortar and materials of matter does it not? Wealth and power. Wealth and power?

SCROOGE: *(Looking off.)* Wealth and power.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: That is one of your mantras is it not?

SCROOGE: But these people... Bob Cratchit, his family, Tiny Tim they have power from within.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: But not the wealth.

BOB CRATCHIT: Right then. It's time to eat! Who's hungry?

ALL CRATCHIT CHILDREN: Me!

Foley SFX: Sound of plates and silverware.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Now the goose is steaming and the gravy is hissing hot. Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigor; Miss Martha sweetened up the apple-sauce.

TINY TIM: It all sounds so delicious!

NARRATOR: And while the Cratchit family prepares their holiday feast they hold hands and remember.

BOB CRATCHIT: Let us all be thankful for what we have. For life. For love. For beauty. To my wife and wonderful mother of my children. To the dreams and prayers answered that are our children. And to Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Me?

EVERYONE slowly lift their heads. SCROOGE is taken aback.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Mr. Scrooge?! That old miser. That crotchety old—

BOB CRATCHIT: My dear, the children! Everyone needs our good thoughts. Even Mr. Scrooge.

MRS. CRATCHIT: (*Begrudgingly.*) For your sake I will make a prayer. If you deem it necessary.

BOB CRATCHIT: Amen.

ALL CRATCHITS: AMEN!

NARRATOR: And the family ate.

Foley SFX: Sound of dishes and silverware scrapping. The CRATCHIT'S laugh during dinner.

THE CRATCHITS: Mmmmmmm.

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

They eat again.

SCROOGE: The goose is eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes. A sufficient dinner for all. Although, how? This meal must have cost Bob Cratchit two months of work.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: A drop in the bucket for you though, yes?

SCROOGE: Yes.

BOB CRATCHIT: (*Holding up a glass.*) A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.

THE CRATCHITS: God bless us.

TINY TIM: Every one of us.

BOB CRATCHIT: Well said young man.

MRS. CRATCHIT: Well said my dear.

TINY TIM: (*Very fun and dramatic.*) Thank you! Thank you my loyal audience. For my next performance, I'd like to perform... A lion!

TINY TIM acts out a lion.

TINY TIM: Roooar! Rooaaar!

The CRATCHIT'S laugh.

PETER CRATCHIT: Your hair is like the beast!

MARTHA CRATCHIT: And you have the heart of a lion, Tiny Tim!

BOB CRATCHIT: Indeed you do.

TINY TIM: I love you. All of you. How lucky I am to have a family like mine.

BOB CRATCHIT: And how lucky we are to have a little pride among the pack.

NARRATOR: With that the Cratchit family engages in a heart felt embrace.

TINY TIM coughs a little, but then subsides.

SCROOGE: Tiny Tim. *(To the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.)*
Will he live?

Beat.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: I see a vacant seat, and a crutch without an owner. If these shadows remain unaltered by the future... the child will die.

SCROOGE: No. Oh no, kind Spirit.

BOB CRATCHIT: *(To his family.)* To Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!

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

BOB CRATCHIT: *(To Mrs. CRATCHIT.)* My dear, the children. Christmas day.

MRS. CRATCHIT: It should be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks to the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: Mr. Scrooge is cheap.

PETER CRATCHIT: Mr. Scrooge is selfish mother says.

MARTHA CRATCHIT: Mr. Scrooge is an old miser.

BOB CRATCHIT: My dears—

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

BOB CRATCHIT: To Mr. Scrooge.

ALL CRATCHIT CHILDREN: (*Unenthusiastic.*) To Mr. Scrooge.

TINY TIM, with his head high sings "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear". After a few verses the ENTIRE ENSEMBLE joins in. After a few verses they hum as the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR: And as the Cratchits sing from their hearts they know that Tiny Tim's fate is close at hand. Tim's mother, who has raised him since birth knows this more than any other person in London.

SCROOGE: Spirit, he is just a boy.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT: The world is difficult. The pining of materials keeps us moving does it not? Were those words spoken by you?

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