

**What The Dickens?
A Christmas Carol
for Any Scrooge**

*Original Story by Charles Dickens
VERY Loosely adapted by Matt Austin*

WHAT THE DICKENS? A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR ANY SCROOGE

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WHAT THE DICKENS? A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR ANY SCROOGE

For Mom, Dad, Jess, Jody, Bob, Gary, Jenny & Billy

WHAT THE DICKENS? A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR ANY SCROOGE

What The Dickens? A Christmas Carol for Any Scrooge was originally produced at Theatreworks New Milford in New Milford, CT, featuring the following cast:

Actor #1..... Bob Lussier
Actor #2.....Matt Austin
Actor #3.....Gary Millar
Actor #4.....Billy Dempster
Actor #5.....Jenny Schuck
Actor #6.....Jody Bayer

CAST: 1M, 5 Flexible

Ideally, the show will consist of one actor playing Scrooge and 5-6 other actors playing everyone and everything else. Role assignments and doubling up to the director. Suggested breakdown, as follows:

ACTOR #1 Ebenezer Scrooge
ACTOR #2 Announcer, Narrator 1, Frederick, Want, Passerby #1, Townsperson, Constance
ACTOR #3 Narrator 2, Bob Cratchit, Mrs. Fezziwig, Isabella, Passerby #2, Townsperson
ACTOR #4 Clock / Fireplace, Clarence / Marley, Fan, Cody, Cratchit Children, Willy Loman, Ignorance, Fake Scrooge
ACTOR #5 Man #1, Christmas Past, Tiny Tim, Christmas Yet to Come, Townsperson
ACTOR #6 Man #2, Young Scrooge, Teen Scrooge, Mr. Fezziwig, Christmas, Linda Loman, Townsperson, Boy, Passerby #3

A note from the author: Have fun with this show. Please stay true to the script, but make it your own. Also, rights for the popular songs used in this show need to be obtained separately. ‘Tiptoe Through the Tulips’ is in public domain.

WHAT THE DICKENS? A CHRISTMAS CAROL FOR ANY SCROOGE

SCENE 1

ANNOUNCER. Ladies and gentleman, welcome to <Insert theater name here>. It has come to our attention that the majority of you are here to see a production of Charles Dickens' classic 'A Christmas Carol'. We regret to inform you that for the last several weeks our cast and crew have been rehearsing a different play; Arthur Miller's little known holiday play 'Wreath of a Salesman'. Shortly before this evening's performance the cast and crew was made aware of this marketing snafu. They have found a copy of Charles Dickens' classic novel backstage, as well as a bunch of Dickensian costumes used most recently in our children's production of Oliver and will indeed be presenting 'A Christmas Carol' this evening for you to the best of their ability. So... sit back relax and enjoy...A Christmas Carol ...hopefully...

The lights go down. We hear Fred Astaire's 'Easter Bonnet'. A cast member dressed as a stage manager leans out from the wings or pops their head through a curtain and waves to the booth to "cut it". The music shifts to Bobby Pickett's 'Monster Mash'. The Stage manager waves again and the music shifts to some sort of classic Christmas carol sung by a choir. During this carol the cast brings out props and set pieces (two windows on wheels, a door in a frame on wheels, a handful of chairs, a costume rack full of costumes and a trunk full of props). A clock bell is heard clanging and two narrators appear onstage.

NARRATOR #1. Marley was dead.

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NARRATOR #2. Wow.

NARRATOR #1. What?

NARRATOR #2. That was just very dramatic.

NARRATOR #1. Well, he was.

NARRATOR #2. No, I know. It's just a very dramatic way to start the show. "Marley Was Dead". No build up. No "Marley was very sick for a while...then he died". Just boom. Marley was dead.

NARRATOR #1. (*Turning back to narrate*) Dead as a Doornail.

NARRATOR #2. Ok, now you're making fun of him?

NARRATOR #1. That's what Dickens wrote.

NARRATOR #2. Sick burn.

NARRATOR #1. Why are you here?

NARRATOR #2. Oh, I have to play Bob Cratchit in the next scene.

NARRATOR #1. Can you let me finish the opening narration?

NARRATOR #2. Oh, yeah...sorry... (*Narrator #2 leaves starts to leave*)

NARRATOR #1. Marley was dead. Dead as a doornail. He had been dead for seven years this very night...

NARRATOR #2. Wait...so you were super dramatic about him dying but he's been dead for, like, 7 years?

NARRATOR #1. I thought you were leaving.

NARRATOR #2. Sorry

NARRATOR #1. Jacob Marley had been dead for seven years this very night. Not a single person came to his funeral other than his business partner and only friend, Ebenezer Scrooge.

NARRATOR #2. Business partner? What was their business?

NARRATOR #1. It's was called 'Scrooge & Marley'.

NARRATOR #2. I figured that, but what did they do?

NARRATOR #1. Business things.

NARRATOR #2. What kind of business things?

NARRATOR #1. I...don't...know...normal business things. Lending money and such.

NARRATOR #2. That seems really vague. Were they a bank?

NARRATOR #1. Well...not really...

NARRATOR #2. What were they then?

NARRATOR #1. Would you just trust me and get off the stage?

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NARRATOR #2. Ok, sorry. (*Narrator #2 leaves*)

NARRATOR #1. Our story begins seven years to the day Marley died, on Christmas Eve at the firm of Scrooge & Marley. Ebenezer Scrooge kept the name of his business long after Marley died, as a reminder of his old friend. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge, Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names: it was all the same to him. We open on Scrooge and his sole employee, Bob Cratchit, shortly before closing, as the clock chimes three.

No chime is heard. As the clock chimes three...ahem... (Actor #4 notices the clock hasn't chimed so makes the clock chiming noise three times. The actors scramble to assemble a set moving the windows and door into place around Scrooge & Bob Cratchit).

SCROOGE. (*Counting coins*) One hundred forty-two, one hundred forty-three...

CRATCHIT. It's only a few hours to closing time sir. (*Scrooge loses his place*).

SCROOGE. Seventy-two...wait...What did you say Cratchit? You've made me lose my place. It better be important.

CRATCHIT. I was just saying a few more hours until closing time, sir.

SCROOGE. You interrupted my counting of money, to tell me that a few more hours until I have to stop making money until the morning when I can open up and make money again.

CRATCHIT. I guess that's one way to look at it.

SCROOGE. That's the only way to look at it!

CRATCHIT. I mean, technically, there are two ways...

SCROOGE. Shut up, Cratchit. It's cold in here. Put on the fire.

CRATCHIT. Will do, sir. (*The actor looks around and does not see a fireplace. He grabs one of the other actors sitting on stage, drops his character, and says:*) Be the fire.

ACTOR #4. What?

CRATCHIT. Be the fire. There's no fire. We need fire. (*Actor #4 puts up both his hands and starts to wiggle his fingers as to signify fire. The actor playing Cratchit returns to his character*). There you go, sir.

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SCROOGE. Ah, good. I can feel the warmth already. (*Scrooge goes and warms his hands on the “fire” and the actor gets ticklish. Cratchit peers out the window*).

CRATCHIT. Ah, it looks like a customer is coming, sir.

SCROOGE. Look busy, Cratchit! (*Cratchit mimes an over-the-top looking busy routine*). Ok, maybe, slightly less busy. (*Cratchit mimes barely working at all*). Somewhere in between the two, if you would. (*Cratchit mimes a reasonable amount of work*). Perfect! (*Linda Loman enters*).

SCROOGE. Crachit! Who are these...TWO...people? (*Actor #4 realizes that he has to also be Willy Loman in this scene and frantically leaves the stage from being the fire and appears next to Linda Loman. It is very obvious to all he forgot his cue*).

CRATCHIT. (*Nervous that the wrong characters have come on stage*). They appear to be Willy & Linda Loman.

SCROOGE. Oh...

CRATCHIT. From an entirely different....part of town....

SCROOGE. Well, what do you want?

LINDA. We are behind in our payments, Sir.

SCROOGE. Why are you behind on your payments?

WILLY. That goddman refrigerator! (*Scrooge & Cratchit don't know what a refrigerator is*).

LINDA. It's old dear, it's ok.

WILLY. I told you we should have bought one of those General Electric's like Charley has.

SCROOGE. Why have you come to see me?

CRATCHIT. (*Trying to save the scene*) They are behind on their mortgage payments!

LINDA. Yes, our mortgage sir.

WILLY. Twenty-Five years we've been paying off that goddamn house.

LINDA. Just a few payments more.

SCROOGE. So you've come to tell me that you can't pay me.

LINDA. Yes, sir.

SCROOGE. Will you escort these people out?

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir. (*Cratchit begins to usher them out*).

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WILLY. Wait...please listen sir.

SCROOGE. Get out!

WILLY. Pay attention to us!

LINDA. Pay attention to my husband!

SCROOGE. Good day. *(The Lomans are ushered out and the door closes behind them. Scrooge's Nephew Frederick arrives at the door. He pulls the door and it will not budge. He pulls it again, still nothing. We see him look at the others actors in a panic that he cannot get the door open. Cratchit mimes "go around". Frederick steps around the door and enters the scene).*

FREDERICK. A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you! *(The door swings open by itself. The actors freeze and stare at it. They resume the scene. A stage manager come on and shuts the door).*

SCROOGE. What do you want? *(They both acknowledge the stage manager closing the door awkwardly).*

FREDERICK. I've come to say hello, Uncle.

SCROOGE. Cratchit, stop working, he's not a customer and he'll be gone shortly.

CRATCHIT. Way ahead of you, sir.

FREDERICK. I have come to invite you...

SCROOGE. I know what you've come for and the answer is no. It's always no. Last year it was no. the year before it was no. The year before that was no. Do you know what it was the year before that, Cratchit?

CRATCHIT. No, sir *(as in – he doesn't know the answer)*

SCROOGE. Yes! *(As in – he is correct)*

CRATCHIT. It was Yes, sir?

SCROOGE. No!

CRATCHIT. No, sir?

SCROOGE. Yes!

CRATCHIT. Which is it, sir?

FREDERICK. Third base?

SCROOGE. Enough of this nonsense! Go ahead and ask me...

FREDERICK. Constance and I would love it if you joined our family for Christmas dinner.

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SCROOGE. Every year you waltz in here and invite me to your place to spend Christmas and every year the answer is no. Next year, save yourself a trip.

FREDERICK. Constance and I would love it if you came, sir. You know how much we love Christmas.

SCROOGE. Christmas? Humbug!

FREDERICK. Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that...

SCROOGE. Of course, I do, I mean everything I say. Why are you so merry anyway? You have no reason to be merry, you are poor enough.

FREDERICK. What reason do you have to be dismal, uncle? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE. Humbug!

FREDERICK. Uncle, I realize that's your catchphrase but, really...

SCROOGE. HUM. BUG. Christmas? What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

FREDERICK. That seems a bit extreme, Uncle.

SCROOGE. I said, good day!

FREDERICK. No, you didn't.

SCROOGE. Well, I meant to. Leave at once.

FREDERICK. (*A la Linus' "Meaning of Christmas speech" from 'A Charlie Brown Christmas'. His scarf becomes a blanket*). Lights, please. Listen, Uncle. Christmas is a time of good. 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 behind Scrooge. Scrooge turn around to "catch" him and he stops*).

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SCROOGE. What a lovely monologue. Maybe it will get you a Broadwayworld award or something. You know what it won't get you? My sympathies. Now get out.

FREDERICK. I will go. But the offer still stands, uncle. Dinner at my house tomorrow. (*Frederick goes to leave and Scrooge puts his hand on his shoulder to keep him there another minute*).

SCROOGE. May I ask you a question?

FREDERICK. Of course, it's in the script.

SCROOGE. You are married, correct?

FREDERICK. Yes, sir.

SCROOGE. Why did you get married?

FREDERICK. That seems way out of left field but - Love.

SCROOGE. Love. Bah. Out you go!

FREDERICK. Merry Christmas, Uncle! (*Frederick attempts to leave. The door is stuck. He cannot open it again. He awkwardly walks around it to leave. The door swings open by itself after he has gone. Cratchit closes it*).

SCROOGE. Put out the fire, Cratchit. I think it's time we close up for the evening. (*Cratchit goes to where the fire was standing and see the actor has given up on doing "fire fingers" long ago. He taps him and mimes "do the fire". The actor put up one hand only wiggling five fingers. Cratchit blows once and on finger goes down, he starts to leave thinking they would all go out. He sees that they do not. He blows again and only one more finger goes down. He blows two more times leaving only the actor's middle finger up. The actor realizes and quickly blows it out*).

CRATCHIT. Oh! Another customer!

SCROOGE. Not "another", that last one was my foolish nephew.

CRATCHIT. They seem to be coming right down the lane. (*It is obvious to everyone that the two actors have missed their cue*).

ANY SECOND THE TWO GENTLEMEN SHOULD BE HERE. (*Another awkward pause as Cratchit and Scrooge stare at the front door of the shop. Two actors are pushed on stage opposite the two actors portraying Cratchit and Scrooge. The two men enter unbeknownst to Scrooge & Cratchit. The men speaking startle Scrooge & Cratchit*).

MAN #1. Hello. We are here.

SCROOGE. Yes, I can see that. Why have you come?

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MAN #1. We have come...we have come...because... (*Pushes man two towards Scrooge as if to say "You speak"*).

MAN #2. To whom are we addressing...Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley? (*Man #2 look back at Man #1 with a look of "I did it, it's the right line"*)

SCROOGE. Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died Seven years this very night.

CRATCHIT. How can we help you gentleman? (*They stare blankly. Cratchit tries to prompt them*) Are you charity men here to ask for a donation? (*The two men look at each other as if to say "ok, let's 'yes, and' this"*)

MAN #1. Yes, AND we are here to ask for donations...

MAN #2. Yes, we are asking for donation AND the donation are for.... for... the.... POOR?! And the...uh...destitute...yeah that's who needs money...

SCROOGE. Good, I see you've taken at least an entry level improv class.

MAN #1. Yes, AND... (*Man #2 hits Man #1 as to say "cut it out"*)

MAN #2. At this time of year, many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

SCROOGE. Are there no prisons? No workhouses?

MAN #1. I think there still are.

SCROOGE. Glad to hear it!

MAN #2. What shall we put you down for?

SCROOGE. Then put me down for nothing.

MAN #2. You wish to be anonymous?

SCROOGE. I wish to be left alone!

MAN #1. But sir....

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

MAN #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! Good. Day. Gentleman. (*The men are supposed to exit but they do not move. Cratchit whispers*).

CRATCHIT. Exit stage right.

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MAN #2. Ah yes, exit stage right. And an “exit stage right” to you good sir!

CRATCHIT. Get off the stage.

MAN #1. Oh, and a Get off the stage to you my good sir.

SCROOGE. LEAVE (*The men finally leave*). It’s just about closing time, Cratchit. What time is it? (*Cratchit quickly goes to the actor playing the bell and tells him to chime 5 times*).

CRATCHIT. Five O’clock, sir.

SCROOGE. Five o’clock? Are you sure?

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir.

SCROOGE. When we started this scene, it was three o’clock? Are you telling me all of these relatively quick events happened over a period of two hours?

CRATCHIT. Uh...yes...sir?

SCROOGE. Nevermind, logistics. I suppose you will want tomorrow off?

CRATCHIT. If it’s quite convenient, sir

SCROOGE. It’s NOT convenient!

CRATCHIT. I only ask for this once a year, sir.

SCROOGE. A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December. You may have the day off, but be here all the earlier next morning.

CRATCHIT. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

Narrator #1 walks on stage holding a copy of ‘A Christmas Carol’.

NARRATOR #1. And so, Scrooge and Cratchit closed up shop for the night...

SCROOGE. (*Dropping character*) So...this scene is over?

NARRATOR #1. Yes

SCROOGE. Rather abrupt, don’t you think?

NARRATOR #1. We only have so much time. We’ve got to move the story along. (*Acknowledging the book he is holding*). We’ve got 327 more pages to get through, so here I am.

CRATCHIT. Seems like a lazy form of storytelling.

NARRATOR #1. Would you two just leave the stage...

SCROOGE & CRATCHIT. Will do. (*They Exit*)

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SCENE 2

NARRATOR #1. As I was saying... Scrooge and Cratchit closed up shop for the evening. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. As he prepared his bed chamber Scrooge began to hear a clanking noise deep down below. *(The narrator pauses as if waiting for clanking chain noises. Nothing happens).* There was a CLANKING NOISE deep down below.... *(Offstage the actors realize they are missing a sound effect so we hear a bunch of lame banging coming from the wings).* I guess that will do... along with the clanking noise was heard the ghostly moans of undead spirits... *(The actors offstage very lamely moan).* Come on, really? Anyway... Scrooge became increasingly afraid of what he was about to encounter. In through the window flew a ghost resembling his business partner Jacob Marley. *(Very lamely we see a man dressed as the angel Clarence from 'It's a Wonderful Life' climb through the window).*

SCROOGE. Humbug! I won't believe it!

CLARENCE. Hello George!

SCROOGE. It's Ebenezer...

CLARENCE. Quiet, George... I have come to help you...

SCROOGE. Why were you sent here?

CLARENCE. I'm your guardian angel, George Bailey. I've come to show you what your life would be like if you were never born. *(A stage manager sneaks on stage and very obviously whispers in Clarence's ear that he's doing the wrong Christmas show. Clarence embarrassingly slinks off stage. Returns quickly covered in chains and a headwrap a la Jacob Marley. To the stage manager:).* Thank you, Julie *(not her name).*

STAGE MANAGER. It's <Insert Stage Manager's actual name>

CLARENCE. Oh. Thanks <name>. Can we take it back a few lines? Maybe to 'Humbug'?

SCROOGE. Sure. Humbug! I won't believe it!

MARLEY. Hello Ebenezer!

SCROOGE. What do you want with me?

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MARLEY. Much!

SCROOGE. Who are you?

MARLEY. Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE. Who were you?

MARLEY. Clarence, but that was wrong.

SCROOGE. No, who were you in life? (*Marley is confused as to what his name is now, having prepared his role as Clarence*).

MARLEY. In life I was your partner...Bob Marley...

SCROOGE. Jacob...

MARLEY. Bob Jacob...

SCROOGE. No, Marley...

MARLEY. Marley Jacob...

SCROOGE. Closer...

MARLEY. Jacob Marley!

SCROOGE. I don't believe you.

MARLEY. Do you doubt your senses? (*The narrator steps on stage*).

NARRATOR #1. Just then, Jacob Marley let out a frightful cry and unwrapped the bandage from around his head and as Scrooge witnessed Marley's jaw detach from his head and drop to the floor.

MARLEY. Gross.

NARRATOR #1. I know, that's why this part is narration. No one wants to see that.

MARLEY. Thank you.

NARRATOR #1. Carry on...

SCROOGE. Spirit, why do you trouble 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! Woe is me...WOE IS ME...OH WOE IS ME...WOE WOE WOE WOE...

SCROOGE. Ok, that's enough. Why are you fettered?

MARLEY. (*Misunderstanding what Scrooge is saying*). Feta?

SCROOGE. Fettered.

MARLEY. Fet...what?

SCROOGE. Fettered...F-E-T-T-E-R-E-D...Fettered!

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MARLEY. What are you S-A-Y-I-N-G... saying?

SCROOGE. Why are you restrained with chains...fettered...?

MARLEY. We didn't all go to Julliard, Mr. Fancy...

SCROOGE. Why do you wear these chains?

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 wear it.

SCROOGE. You know girded but not fettered?

MARLEY. These links represent my failings in business.

SCROOGE. Failings? Business?

MARLEY. 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.

SCROOGE. What are you saying?

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

SCROOGE. I still don't get it.

MARLEY. Look, basically, I couldn't save myself, but you still have a chance to do good in this world. Don't end up like me...blah blah blah...

SCROOGE. Oh, right.

(Marley goes to leave, possibly does leave and the stage manager tell him to go back on stage as he has one more thing to do)

MARLEY. Oh...and also...tonight you will be visited by three spirits.

SCROOGE. No, thank you.

MARLEY. You don't have a choice in the matter.

SCROOGE. Oh.

MARLEY. Expect the first, when the clock chimes one. The second spirit will arrive when the clock chimes two. And the third spirit when the clock chimes five.

SCROOGE. Why the three-hour gap?

MARLEY. What?

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SCROOGE. You said the first will arrive at one, the second at two and the third at five. There is a three-hour gap between the second and third ghost.

MARLEY. That one has a longer distance to travel and you know how it is around the holidays. And then finding parking. Do you know if alternate side parking is in effect? Is there a meter situation out there?

SCROOGE. I...I...don't know...

MARLEY. Alright, I'll have them Uber. They can write it off on their expense report. Now, I must go.

SCROOGE. Go...but you haven't even explained... (*Scrooge looks around and Marley is gone*). Marley. Marley. Where are you?

SCENE 3

Narrator #1 steps on stage.

NARRATOR #1. And so, Scrooge returned to bed. He attempted to return to sleep, but he was unable. He tossed and turned throughout the night.

SCROOGE. Toss! Turn!

NARRATOR #1. He wondered if his vision was all just a dream.

SCROOGE. Wonder! Wonder! Wonder!

NARRATOR #1. After laying there for a few hours, he got out of bed and scrambled toward the window.

SCROOGE. Scramble! Scramble!

NARRATOR #1. Ok, that's enough. The clock crept toward one o'clock as Scrooge nervously anticipated his foretold visitor. (*The actor playing the clock "chimes" one*).

SCROOGE. One O'clock! And no visitor! It was all a dream!

NARRATOR #1. Just then, light flashed upon the room and Scrooge was face to face with an unearthly visitor. (*We see the actor portraying Christmas Past very confidently appear*). It was a strange visitor. (*Christmas Past seems confused*). This figure was much like a child. (*Christmas Past hears the description and begins to act like a child*). Yet, not so like a child as an old man viewed through some supernatural medium.

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CHRISTMAS PAST. *(Drops character)* So wait...am I a child or an old man?

NARRATOR #1. Yes. *(They leave abruptly)*

CHRISTMAS PAST. Very helpful. Thank you.

SCROOGE. Are you the spirit that was foretold to me?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Aww man, Marley always does this.

SCROOGE. What?

CHRISTMAS PAST. He always beats me to places and then ruins the surprise.

SCROOGE. Well, if it makes you feel better, he didn't tell me WHO you are.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Oh, good.

SCROOGE. Who are you?

CHRISTMAS PAST. I am the ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE. Long past?

CHRISTMAS PAST. No, your past.

SCROOGE. Solid joke.

CHRISTMAS PAST. I know, right? Dickens actually wrote that.

SCROOGE. Why have you come?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Your welfare, sir.

SCROOGE. Humbug!

CHRISTMAS PAST. Get up, come with me, out the window we go.

SCROOGE. Out the window?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Yes, out the window.

SCROOGE. Could we not go through the door?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Us ghosts prefer windows.

SCROOGE. But I am a mere mortal. We are three stories up.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Oh, don't bother with that. Just touch my hand and come with me. *(The ghost of Christmas Past does the "doodle-lo" flashback noises from 'Wayne's World' to signify that we're going back in time).*

SCROOGE. What is that? What are you doing? *(The bedroom disappears and the ghost of Christmas Past grabs Scrooge's arm to pull him around the stage to "fly").* What are you doing?

CHRISTMAS PAST. We're flying.

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SCROOGE. Flying?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Just pretend. It's Community Theater. We don't have a flying budget.

SCROOGE. Oh, alright. (*The "fly" around the stage. As that happens, the scene shifts to Young Scrooge at his schoolroom desk reading a book.*)

CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you recognize this place, Ebenezer?

SCROOGE. Why this...this is...the school I went to as a child. Rich White Family Academy.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Why yes...wait...did you say the name of the School was Rich White Family Academy?

SCROOGE. Yes, founded by Richard White.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Oh...Rich White...Richard White...I thought you meant...it seemed a little too on the nose.

SCROOGE. And there I am.

CHRISTMAS PAST. All alone. (*Scrooge begins to tear up.*) What is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE. Nothing.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Is that a tear?

SCROOGE. No, just allergies.

CHRISTMAS PAST. What are you allergic to?

SCROOGE. Bad acting.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Wow. Ok. I'll back off.

SCROOGE. Scrooge! It's me! You!

CHRISTMAS PAST. He can't see or hear you.

SCROOGE. Oh.

CHRISTMAS PAST. No one in these flashbacks can. Let's establish that as canon. Don't touch anyone. What is that book? (*We see Young Scrooge heartily enjoying the book he is reading. It is '50 Shades of Grey'.*)

SCROOGE. It appears to be '50 Shades of Grey'. (*The Ghost of Christmas Past grabs the book from Young Scrooge throws it into the wings and hears an "owww", as if someone were hit by it. A new book, 'Ali Baba', gets tossed from the wings hitting Young Scrooge*)

YOUNG SCROOGE. OWWW!

CHRISTMAS PAST. What is that book now, sir?

SCROOGE. Ah yes, Ali Baba.

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CHRISTMAS PAST. One of your favorites?

SCROOGE. Yes, one of my favorites. Poor Boy.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Poor boy?

SCROOGE. A young boy with no friends to share his joy with.

CHRISTMAS PAST. To be alone was his choice, was it not?

SCROOGE. It was. I wish...

CHRISTMAS PAST. What's the matter?

SCROOGE. There was a group of carolers at my door the other night, I should like to have given them something...

CHRISTMAS PAST. While you can't change the past, you can control your future.

SCROOGE. I don't want to see any more of this! Take me away!

CHRISTMAS PAST. If you say so. Onto another Christmas! (*Christmas Past begins to make the 'Wayne's World' flashback sounds. Young Scrooge leaves the stage. Scrooge & Christmas past begin to "fly" around the stage.*)

SCROOGE. We're doing this again?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Oh, this is just the beginning. (*They "land" to observe Teen Scrooge and his sister Fan.*)

FAN. Dear, dear brother, welcome home!

TEEN SCROOGE. I do not wish to be home and you know that, Fan.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Your sister's name is Fan? Is it short for something?

SCROOGE. No, just Fan.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you mean Fran. With an 'R'.

SCROOGE. No, just Fan.

CHRISTMAS PAST. As in Ceiling?

SCROOGE. Yes, that's her name. Can we move on?

TEEN SCROOGE. You know I don't want to go home dear sister.

FAN. Father is so much kinder than he used to be.

TEEN SCROOGE. I cannot, you must understand.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Your sister was a gentle soul. She had a large heart.

SCROOGE. She did.

CHRISTMAS PAST. But she died.

SCROOGE. She did.

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CHRISTMAS PAST. Was it from the large heart? That seems like a serious medical problem.

SCROOGE. This is no time for jokes.

CHRISTMAS PAST. She had a son.

SCROOGE. Yes, my nephew Fred.

CHRISTMAS PAST. You would think she would have named him Fed.

SCROOGE. What?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Seeing as she was Fan, Fran without an “r”, Fed. Fred without an...ok, no more jokes.

SCROOGE. I do not wish to talk about Fred.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Why do you dislike him so when you loved his mother so much?

SCROOGE. It wasn't her large heart.

CHRISTMAS PAST. What?

SCROOGE. She did not die of a large heart. She died in childbirth.

CHRISTMAS PAST. With Fed?

SCROOGE. Yes, with Fed...I mean...Fred.

CHRISTMAS PAST. So you blame him?

SCROOGE. I don't blame him.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Why else are you so mean to him, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE. It's just...I...I...I don't want to see anymore, spirit.

CHRISTMAS PAST. One more memory. Follow me downstage right.

SCROOGE. Downstage Right?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Yes. Downstage right.

SCROOGE. Your right or the audience's right?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Our right.

SCROOGE. Which was is downstage?

CHRISTMAS PAST. The front.

SCROOGE. That doesn't make any sense.

CHRISTMAS PAST. A long time ago stages tilted toward the audience so the front was “down”.

SCROOGE. Fun fact.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Just follow me. (*Christmas Past begins to make the 'Wayne's World' flashback noises. Fan and Teen Scrooge fade away and Mr. & Mrs. Fezziwig appear decked out in Christmas clothes. They are*

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hosting their annual Christmas Ball. Partygoers mingle and a fiddler is playing music).

SCROOGE. Why it's old Fezziwig! And one of his famous balls!

CHRISTMAS PAST. Excuse me?

SCROOGE. Old Fezziwig had the best balls! Larger than anyone in town! Everyone loved his balls!

CHRISTMAS PAST. You do hear what you are saying, right?

SCROOGE. Oh how I miss his balls!

CHRISTMAS PAST. Ok, just stop. Now you're doing it on purpose.

SCROOGE. And there is Mrs. Fezziwig!

CHRISTMAS PAST. I bet she really loved his balls.

SCROOGE. How dare you sir, that is inappropriate!

CHRISTMAS PAST. Wait...but you just... *(There is laughing and merriment. The partygoers all are singing and dancing. A fiddle player is fiddling away. Mr. Fezziwig clinks a glass to make a speech).*

MR. FEZZIWIG. Attention! Attention! May I have your attention please?

Thank you all so much for joining the missus and I for our annual Christmas Ball. I know how much everyone loves my balls. I, in fact, am very proud of my balls. Each and every year they grow bigger and bigger.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Does he not hear what he's saying either?

MR. FEZZIWIG. My balls have gotten so big that they have been written about in the local newspaper! My balls take up two pages!

CHRISTMAS PAST. Ok, if this is just going to be a bunch of ball jokes I'm fast forwarding this. *(Christmas Past pulls out a remote control and "fast forwards" the scene. The actors should react in quick motions as if being fast forwarded for a comically extended period of time. Christmas Past hits "stop" toward the end of Mr. Fezziwig's speech).*

MR. FEZZIWIG. But, enough about my balls...

PARTY GOER. We want to hear more!

MR. FEZZIWIG. Ok, just a little more about my balls.... *(Christmas Past hits "fast forward" on the remote again. The actors move about frantically fast forwarding. Christmas Past hits 'stop').*

MR. FEZZIWIG. ...and I said liquor.... I hardly know her! Anyway...on to my annual Christmas Tradition. The giving of the Christmas bonus'. Mrs. Fezziwig. Will you do the honor and pass out the envelopes.

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(Mrs. Fezziwig begin to give out envelopes to each guest at the party. Once they receive the envelope they bolt as if that's the only reason they came.

The following is delivered as if Mr. Fezziwig slowly realizes that's the only reason people come to his balls). I hope and your families have prosperous new year! I love each and every one of you as if you were my own!

SCROOGE. Mr. Fezziwig was the kindest boss. He loved every employee as his own children.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Sounds like a great man.

SCROOGE. He was. This is where I met my Belle.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Who is Belle?

SCROOGE. My Fiancé...well...she was. There we are...

MR. FEZZIWIG. Ebby, I want you to meet my niece...Isabella

(Teen Scrooge and Isabelle look at each other, a spotlight on them and a heavenly choir are heard. Once that cue is over, they both look around for where both things came from).

TEEN SCROOGE. Hello, nice to meet you, Isabella.

ISABELLA. Call me Belle.

TEEN SCROOGE. You may call me Ebenezer Scrooge.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Wow. You were even a dick to her?

SCROOGE. Shhhh... I want to watch.

(Teen Scrooge and Isabella begin to dance lovingly).

CHRISTMAS PAST. No time for that!

SCROOGE. What?

CHRISTMAS PAST. We've got to speed this up. We have two more ghosts and a redemption to get through.

SCROOGE. Where are we going? What about Belle?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Oh, you'll see her again... *(They begin to fly around the stage. They come to an empty stage)*

CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you recognize this small footbridge? *(Scrooge sees that the footbridge is not in place).*

SCROOGE. What small footbridge?

CHRISTMAS PAST. *(Annoyed the footbridge is not in place yet)* THIS.

SMALL. FOOTBRIDGE. *(Silence. After an extended pause a comically small Footbridge is slid onto the stage. Barely big enough to fit two people. Teen Scrooge and Isabelle walk on stage. They attempt to both*

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stand on the footbridge. A comedic “bit” ensues in which they both attempt to stand on it. Realizing they both can’t fit, Teen Scrooge kicks it off stage and the scene continues).

ISABELLA. I can no longer be engaged to you, Ebby.

TEEN SCROOGE. Why not?

ISABELLA. Another idol has displaced me in your heart.

TEEN SCROOGE. What do you mean?

ISABELLA. A golden one. *(She takes off her ring and places in Teen Scrooge’s hand. Closes his hand around it).*

TEEN SCROOGE. But, Belle...

ISABELLA. The jungle is dark but full of diamonds.

TEEN SCROOGE. What?

ISABELLA. You can’t eat the orange and throw the peel away...a man is not a piece of fruit.

TEEN SCROOGE. Belle...

ISABELLA. Why am I trying to become what I don’t want to be ... when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am.

TEEN SCROOGE. But...

ISABELLA. Sometimes...it's better for a man just to walk away. But if you can't walk away? I guess that's when it's tough

SCROOGE. I’m very confused.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Classic Arthur Miller

SCROOGE. But...

CHRISTMAS PAST. Shhhh.....watch....

ISABELLA. Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you. *(She kisses his forehead and walks off. Teen Scrooge stands there alone. Adult Scrooge goes to go after Isabella).*

SCROOGE. Belle...

CHRISTMAS PAST. Remember, she can’t hear you.

SCROOGE. I know. Why do you torture me like this?

CHRISTMAS PAST. One shadow more!

SCROOGE. No more! I wish to see no more!

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CHRISTMAS PAST. Off we fly!

SCROOGE. Wait...

CHRISTMAS PAST. What?

SCROOGE. There was not one single joke in this scene.

CHRISTMAS PAST. It can't all be funny. Some of it needs to be exposition.

SCROOGE. Alright.

CHRISTMAS PAST. Let's fly! *(They "fly" about the stage, they happen upon the home of Isabella and her new husband, Cody).*

SCROOGE. Where are we now?

CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you recognize her?

SCROOGE. That's Belle. Who is that man?

CHRISTMAS PAST. That's her husband, Cody.

SCROOGE. Cody??

CHRISTMAS PAST. Don't be mad, she married someone after you.

SCROOGE. I'm less mad at her marrying someone else, but a guy named Cody? Is he in a frat? *(The scene shifts to Isabella and Cody).*

CODY. I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.

ISABELLA. Who was it?

CODY. Guess!

ISABELLA. How can I? Give me a hint.

CODY. You used to date him. *(The following dialogue is in quick succession).*

ISABELLA. Mark?

CODY. No

ISABELLA. John?

CODY. No

ISABELLA. Andrew?

CODY. No

ISABELLA. Steve?

CODY. No

ISABELLA. Matthew?

CODY. No

ISABELLA. Ramon?

CODY. No

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ISABELLA. Zack?

CODY. No

ISABELLA. Josh?

CODY. No?

ISABELLA. Andrew

CODY. No, and you already said him.

ISABELLA. Different Andrew.

CODY. Oh

ISABELLA. Patrick?

CODY. Ok, maybe, let's not play this game....

ISABELLA. Tell me who you saw!

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

SCROOGE. Take me away from this. I don't want to hear anymore.

CHRISTMAS PAST. I know, can you believe the number of men she's dated?

SCROOGE. No that. Just be gone.

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS--
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