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## **Family Plays**

From the Dickens' classic

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL



Adapted by Jerome McDonough

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Marrying fidelity to Dickens' words with open, simple staging and costuming, McDonough's script is fresh and highly performable.

"We like the play [*A Christmas Carol*]. It's different." (Sister M. Eurose, Redemptorist High School, New Orleans, La.)

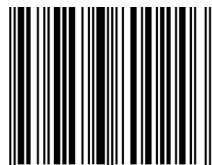
***Drama. Adapted by Jerome McDonough from Dickens' classic. Cast: 12 to 30 actors, flexible. A Christmas Carol*** has been one of the favorite presentations on Christmas programs for more than a century. Due to the multiple sets and numerous characters required, many dramatizations have failed in their presentations. Now, Jerome McDonough's adaptation offers an exciting style. Scene changes are effected by members of the "living cyclorama" (the chorus), thus maintaining the flow of the play even during slight pauses in the action. Characters enter the scenes from their positions on the cyclorama. This simplification of the physical aspects of the play has the added advantage of making the entire production highly portable. The original cast, for example, performed the entire play five times in five different schools in the time span of a single school day. Blocked as indicated in the script, *A Christmas Carol* has been performed in spaces ranging from large proscenium stages to flat areas measuring barely 10 by 15 feet. The cast members form a living cyclorama before which all scenes are acted. *Open staging. Set pieces are limited to four chairs, two plain tables and a doorframe. Costumes: basic black outfit with one additional element per character to suggest the character. Only Scrooge requires more elaborate costuming. Suitable for touring. Approximate running time: 35 minutes. Code: CL1.*

## Family Plays

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A Christmas Carol

**Charles Dickens'**

# **A Christmas Carol**

**Made into a One-Act Play**

**by**

**JEROME McDONOUGH**

*(Author of "Fables," "Asylum," etc.)*

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

## *Dramatis Personnae*

Narrator	Cratchit Girl
Ebenezer Scrooge	Cratchit Boy
Bob Cratchit	Martha Cratchit
Charity Ladies 1 and 2	Tiny Tim
Marley's Ghost	Nephew's Wife
Ghost of Christmas Past	Ignorance (Boy)
Scrooge as a Boy	Poverty (Girl)
Fanny (Scrooge's sister)	Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come
Scrooge as a Young Man	Merchants 1, 2, and 3
Ellen (Young Scrooge's Fiancee)	Ragseller
Ellen's Husband	House Maid
Ghost of Christmas Present	Bearer of Tombstone
Mrs. Cratchit	Girl in Sunday Clothes
	Butcher (optional)

## *Double Casting*

Double and triple casting will be necessary in most companies. The arrangement suggested here brings the troupe down to fifteen members. (Parenthetical notes indicate sex of performer.)

Narrator (m or f)  
Scrooge (m)  
Bob Cratchit (m)  
Marley's Ghost, Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (m)  
Charity Lady 1, Ghost of Christmas Present, Merchant 3 (f)  
Charity Lady 2, Ellen, Mrs. Cratchit (f)  
Nephew, Fiancee's Husband (m)  
Ghost of Christmas Past, Nephew's Friend (m or f)  
Tiny Tim, Boy Scrooge (m)  
Fanny, Cratchit Girl, Poverty (Girl), Girl in Sunday Clothes (f)  
Young Scrooge, Ragseller (m)  
Cratchit Boy, Ignorance (Boy) (m)  
Martha Cratchit, Merchant 1 (f)  
Nephew's Wife, Merchant 2 (f)  
House Maid, Bearer of Tombstone (f)

There are infinite possibilities for double casting a play which includes so many characters. It seems unlikely, however, that A CHRISTMAS CAROL could be mounted by a company numbering fewer than a dozen performers. Actors playing children's parts need not be children. The smallest members of the troupe provide adequate credibility. If necessary, a girl may portray Tiny Tim and the Boy Scrooge.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

This adaptation was first performed on December 18, 1975, in a tour of Amarillo, Texas, schools, under the direction of Jerome McDonough with the following cast:

Scrooge . . . . .	Shaun Hare
Narrator . . . . .	Michele Meyer
Bob Cratchit . . . . .	Jay Underwood
Marley's Ghost. . . . .	Steve Russell
Nephew . . . . .	B. Edwin Mills
Ghost of Christmas Past. . . . .	Wess Baugh
Ghost of Christmas Present . . . . .	Pam Noel
Mrs. Cratchit . . . . .	Cindy Davis
Tiny Tim . . . . .	Paul Brown
Martha Cratchit . . . . .	Donna Lookingbill
Cratchit Girl . . . . .	Toye Tuckness
Charity Lady 1 . . . . .	Marie DelMarco
Charity Lady 2 . . . . .	Ellen Keller
Merchant 1 . . . . .	Terri Truitt
Merchant 2 . . . . .	Crystal Sutton
House Maid. . . . .	Lisa Davis
Ragseller. . . . .	Ricki Smith
Ellen (Scrooge's Fiancee) . . . . .	Sandy Ray
Bearer of Tombstone . . . . .	Cyndy Boone

Other parts were covered by double casting.



This adaptation is dedicated, with love, to its original cast and to the memory of a literary giant, Charles Dickens.



### THE BOOK AND THE PLAY

A CHRISTMAS CAROL has been one of the world's most beloved Yuletide stories for well over one hundred years but its theatrical use has been limited due to its extensive set demands and period costuming.

Now comes this new adaptation in Jerome McDonough's exciting style. Marrying fidelity to Dickens' words with open, simple staging and costuming, McDonough's script is fresh and highly performable.

The cast members form a living cyclorama before which all scenes are acted. Set pieces are limited to four chairs, two plain tables, and a door frame. Costuming consists of a basic black outfit, accessoried with one additional element per character to suggest the character. Only Scrooge requires more elaborate costuming.



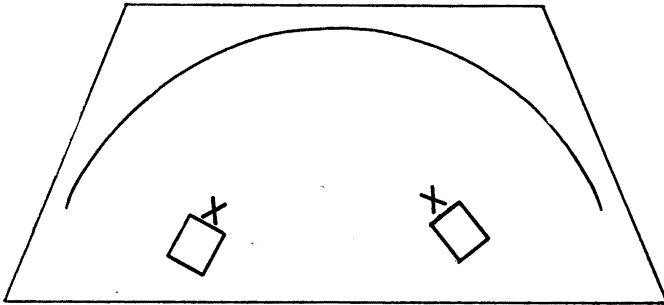
Scene changes are effected by members of the "living cyclorama" (the chorus), thus maintaining the flow of the play even during slight pauses in the action. Characters enter the scenes from their positions on the "cyclorama."

This simplification of the physical aspects of the play has the added advantage of making the entire production highly portable. The original cast, for example, performed the entire play five times in five different schools in the space of a single school day. As it becomes increasingly difficult to bring audiences to the theatre, this adaptation of A CHRISTMAS CAROL makes it possible to take theatre to the audiences.

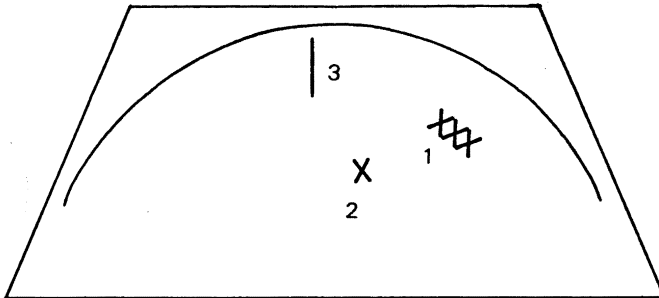
Blocked as indicated in the script, A CHRISTMAS CAROL has been performed in spaces ranging from large proscenium stages to a flat area measuring barely ten-by-fifteen feet.

### *Sets*

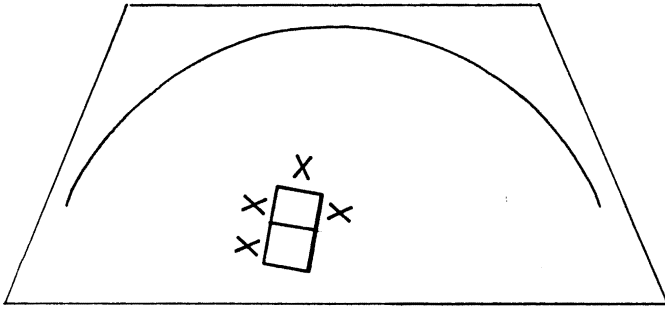
Four chairs, two tables, and a skeletal door frame comprise the entire list of set pieces. Scenes not mentioned in the floor plans below are played on a bare stage in front of the Arc (the "living cyclorama").



*The Counting House: two tables, two chairs.*



*Scrooge's bedchamber: 1 - three chairs as a bed; 2 - one chair as an easy chair; 3 - the door-frame.*



*The Cratchit Home: two tables, four chairs.*

### *Set Changes*

Chorus members add, strike, or rearrange set elements during scene changes. When striking a set piece, the chorus member takes it to his location on the Arc.

Set Changes should enhance rather than interrupt the flow of action. One way to accomplish this is to choreograph the action.

### *The Chorus*

All cast members, when not participating as a specific character in a scene, are members of the chorus. This living cyclorama forms an Arc Up, Left, and Right of the action. The chorus faces away from the audience.

If exits or blocking cause congestion in one area and bare spots in another, the characters performing the next scene change should re-locate and balance the Arc. Characters whose next entrance is across the stage should re-locate early enough to avoid a long cross.

Dialogue or narration cues all chorus actions.

All costume elements and set pieces not in use rest on the floor outside (upstage) of the Arc at that performer's position. Characters dressing during other action should be careful not to draw focus to themselves.

### *Props*

A tombstone (the original production used a tombstone cut from a piece of plywood, painted black.)

A very long black paper or plastic chain

All other props are mimed or constitute part of a costume or set.

### *Lighting*

The original production used a single light setting throughout the play to facilitate matters on the tour. Where possible, a somewhat forbidding subdued light was employed but bright room light also proved satisfactory.

In more formal productions, full light control may be preferred.

**Area lights to designate separate scenes, mood lighting, and color-gelled follow spot for the ghosts could be used with good effect.**

### *Costuming*

The basic costume for all performers is a two-piece black ensemble comprised of a leotard top and full-length wrap-around skirt for women and a shirt and slacks for men.

Character is suggested by accessories added to the basic outfits. Below is the list of accessories used by the original cast.

Scrooge – coat, muffler, cane, dressing gown, night cap

Narrator, Ignorance, Poverty, Bearer of Tombstone – no additional pieces

Bob Cratchit, Nephew, Scrooge as a Boy, Cratchit Girl, Cratchit Boy, Martha Cratchit, and Merchants 1, 2, and 3 – cold weather mufflers (plain or fancy, new or shabby, as indicated by the station of the individual character.)

Marley's Ghost – Paper or plastic chains. (The original production also draped Marley in a 9' x 12' clear plastic tarp. Other ghostlike dress may be preferred. Real chains are not recommended because of the noise problem in putting them on and taking them off.)

Charity Ladies 1 and 2 – rabbit fur muffs

Ghost of Christmas Past – bright cape

Fanny – knit hat

Scrooge as a Young Man – vest

Ellen, Nephew's Wife, Girl in Sunday Clothes – fancy shawls

Fiancee's Husband – coat

Ghost of Christmas Present – a string of plastic holly thrown about neck like a muffler

Mrs. Cratchit – apron

Tiny Tim – tattered muffler and crutch

Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come – black hood draping over shoulders and arms

House Maid – a ragged shawl

Ragseller – a laborer's apron

### *Time*

This script runs approximately thirty-five minutes. The play may be lengthened, however, by the insertion of Christmas songs at several points. The carols suggested below were popular in England in 1843, the period of the Dickens book.

Page 11 – SCROOGE. "... He's a fool." A group of carolers enter the upstage area and sing "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen."

Cratchit smiles and listens. Scrooge grumbles and follows their song with "Humbug!" (A taped or recorded transcription of this song might well be used as exit music at the conclusion of the play.)

Page 22 – NARRATOR. “. . . not unpleasant music.” Strolling carolers perform “Here We Go A-Wassailing.” Scrooge smiles and even taps his foot a bit.

Page 24 – NARRATOR. “. . . and gaiety reigned again.” Tiny Tim sings “Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child.” Scrooge is saddened that this sweet voice will soon be stilled. (A taped or recorded transcription of this song might be well used as introductory music for the play.)

Page 31 – NARRATOR. “. . . smile and a ‘Merry Christmas.’ ” Carolers, perhaps the whole company, sing “Deck the Halls.” Scrooge, fully in the spirit of Christmas, sings lustily and does an impromptu dance with a small girl.

### *Sound*

The original production used only those sound effects which could be suggested vocally, i.e., wailing, the wind, and the bells. Directors may wish to use genuine sounds for the bells and the chains. An offstage or, preferably, a pit sound person could perform these functions.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

*[At rise, the Counting House set is on and the CHORUS is in place.]*

NARRATOR. Jacob Marley was dead, seven years dead on that Christmas Eve. Ebenezer Scrooge, his living partner, never painted out old Marley's name on their sign. There it stood, years afterward, above the warehouse door, "Scrooge and Marley, Counting House." *[SCROOGE crosses from Right to Left, far downstage during following.]* Scrooge was tight-fisted; a squeezing, grasping, covetous old sinner. Heat and cold had little effect on him. No wind blew that was bitterer than he. Nobody ever stopped him on the streets to say, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked, to edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

*[CRATCHIT enters and sets to work, Left, and Scrooge re-enters from Left and moves to his desk, Right, during the following.]*

NARRATOR. Now on the best of all the good days of the year, on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge sat busy in his counting house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather. The door of his office was open, that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, Bob Cratchit, who, in a dismal little cell beyond was copying letters. *[CRATCHIT looks up from his writing momentarily. MR. SCROOGE glares at him and clears his throat impatiently. BOB quickly returns to his work.]* Scrooge had a very small fire but the clerk's fire was so much smaller that it looked like a single coal.

*[Scrooge's NEPHEW enters the counting house, quietly greets Cratchit, and comes up on Scrooge's blind side.]*

NARRATOR. Just then, Scrooge's nephew strode into the shop.

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

SCROOGE. Bah! Humbug!

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. Christmas a humbug, uncle? You don't mean that, I'm sure.

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

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. Come, then. What right have you to be unhappy? You're rich enough.

SCROOGE. Bah! Humbug!

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. Don't be cross, uncle.

SCROOGE. What else can I be when I live in a world of fools? Every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled in his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. Uncle!

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

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. But you *don't* keep it.

SCROOGE. Let me leave it alone, then. Much good it has ever done you – or me!

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold in my pocket, I believe that Christmas *has* done me good and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!

*[BOB CRATCHIT involuntarily applauds but cowers when SCROOGE'S disapproving gaze falls on him.]*

SCROOGE. *[To Cratchit]* Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep Christmas by losing your position! *[To Nephew]* You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE. Bah!

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. I ask nothing of you; why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE. [*Dismissing him*] Good afternoon.

SCROOGE'S NEPHEW. I'm sorry to find you so stubborn but I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. Merry Christmas, uncle.

SCROOGE. Good afternoon.

NEPHEW. [*Exiting*] And a happy New Year!

SCROOGE. Good Afternoon!

[*The NEPHEW stops in the outer office to exchange Christmas greetings with Bob Cratchit.*]

SCROOGE. [*Mumbling to himself*] There's another fellow, my clerk—with fifteen shillings a week and a wife and a family — talking about a merry Christmas. He's a fool.

[*Two LADIES enter, greet Cratchit warmly, then cross to Mr. Scrooge's area.*]

CHARITY LADY 1. Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE. [*Hardly looking up*] Mr. Marley has been gone these seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.

CHARITY LADY 2. Surely his generosity is well represented by his surviving partner. [*SCROOGE frowns.*] At this season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is especially desirable that we make some provision for the poor and destitute. Many are in want of common necessities.

SCROOGE. [*Looking up*] Are there no prisons, no poor-houses?

CHARITY LADY 2. Of course, sir. I wish I could say there were not.

SCROOGE. Oh. I was afraid that something had occurred to close them.

CHARITY LADY 1. They scarcely furnish Christian cheer. A few of us are hoping to raise a fund to buy the poor some

meat and drink and means of warmth. What shall I put you down for?

SCROOGE. [*Hurling his pen down*] Nothing! I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I support prisons and poorhouses with my taxes—they cost enough. Those who are badly off should go there.

CHARITY LADY 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 population. Good afternoon, ladies.

[*He returns to his work as the LADIES exit. CRATCHIT presses a coin into one lady's hand as she passes.*]

NARRATOR. The hour of closing the counting house arrived.

[*SCROOGE stands and addresses the waiting CRATCHIT.*]

SCROOGE. You'll want off all day tomorrow, I suppose?

CRATCHIT. If quite convenient, sir.

SCROOGE. It's not convenient and it's not fair. If I was to stop half a shilling of your pay for it, you'd think yourself wronged, yet you don't think me wronged when I pay a day's wages for no work.

CRATCHIT. But, sir, it's only once a year.

SCROOGE. [*Grumbling*] A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! Be here all the earlier the next morning.

CRATCHIT. Of course, sir. And merry . . . [*SCROOGE frowns.*] Good day, sir. [*He exits.*]

[*SCROOGE exits toward his home, moving Left, then back Right. The Counting House is removed and Scrooge's bedchamber is set on.*]



**MARLEY'S GHOST**

**NARRATOR.** Scrooge walked toward home with a growl. He lived in a gloomy suite of rooms, the more gloomy because nobody lived in them but Scrooge.

*[SCROOGE approaches his house. A chorus member, MARLEY'S GHOST, moves to Down Right, head bowed. SCROOGE mimes the following action.]*

**NARRATOR.** Now it is a fact that there was nothing unusual about the knocker on his door except that it was very large. But Scrooge, having placed his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, not a knocker—but Jacob Marley's face! *[The GHOST raises his head.]* Scrooge put his hand tremblingly back upon the key, turned it and rushed in. He fastened the door and walked quickly upstairs to his bedchamber.

*[The GHOST moves back to the Arc. SCROOGE opens the "Door." Up Center, then closes and double-locks it.]*

**NARRATOR.** He closed the bedchamber door behind him and locked himself in; double-locked, which was not his custom. *[SCROOGE removes his coat, muffler, and cane and puts on his dressing gown and nightcap. A CHORUS MEMBER serves as a clothing rack.]* He put on his dressing gown and his nightcap and sat before his fire, a very low fire, indeed. As he looked about, his glance happened to fall upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room.

*[An Up Left CHORUS MEMBER turns and holds up one hand, like a bell.]*

**NARRATOR.** It was with great astonishment that, as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly at first that it scarcely made a sound *[the bell rings lightly (optional: sound of bell)]*; but soon it rang loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

*[All CHORUS MEMBERS turn and assume bells—large, small, bellowing, tinkling, . . . raising a great clanging roar. (optional: sound of many bells)]*

**NARRATOR.** Then they stopped, as one. *[The CHORUS freezes, then melts to its former position, their backs to the audience.]* The bells were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below, as if some person were dragging a heavy chain. *[Optional: sound of clanking chains]* With the clanking came a low, wailing moan. *[The CHORUS joins hands and begins to slowly writhe and sway. They start to moan, lowly at first.]* Scrooge heard the noises, much louder, on the stairway, coming straight for his door.

*[MARLEY'S GHOST approaches from the Arc, Right.]*

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

**NARRATOR.** His color changed, though, when, without a pause, a chained spectre came through his heavy door and passed into the room before his eyes.

*[The GHOST passes through the door without opening it. The moaning of the CHORUS increases.]*

**SCROOGE.** *[Loudly]* Who . . . who are you?

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** *[Bellowing]* Ask, rather, who I was!

**SCROOGE.** Who were you, then?

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** In life, I was your partner . . . Jacob Marley! *[SCROOGE falls back.]*

*[The moaning stops and the CHORUS melts back to positions.]*

**SCROOGE.** Marley! Marley, why does your spirit walk the earth? Why do you trouble me?

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** The spirit in every man must walk abroad among his fellow men. If that spirit does not go forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death; doomed to wander through the world and witness what it cannot share, what it might once have shared and turned to happiness.

**SCROOGE.** You are chained! Tell me why.

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** I drag the chain I forged in life, forged link by link, and girded on of my own free will. [*SCROOGE trembles.*] Or would you know, rather, the weight of the chain you bear?

**SCROOGE.** No!

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** It was full as heavy as this seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it since.

**SCROOGE.** Marley! Tell me more. But speak comfort to me, Jacob.

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** I have none to give. But mark me! In life my spirit never moved beyond our counting house, our money-changing hole. Now an eternity of weary journeys lie before me!

**SCROOGE.** But you were a good man of business, Jacob.

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** [*Wailing*] Business! Mankind should have been my business—charity, mercy, the common welfare! [*SCROOGE trembles again.*] At this time of year I suffer most. Why did I walk through life with my eyes turned down and never raise them to that blessed Christmas Star? Were there no poor homes to which its light might have conducted me?

**SCROOGE.** But, Jacob, I . . .

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** Hear me, Ebenezer Scrooge!

**SCROOGE.** I will!

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** You yet have a chance of escaping my fate. You will be haunted by three spirits.

**SCROOGE.** Spirits!

**MARLEY'S GHOST.** Without their visits you will never shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls One, the second on the next night at the same hour; the third, upon the third night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more, Ebenezer. But, for your own sake, remember my visit.

*[During the following, two Up Left CHORUS MEMBERS slowly part, forming an "open window."]*

**NARRATOR.** The Apparition moved backward and at every step he took, the bedchamber window raised itself a little. When the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

*[The GHOST beckons to Scrooge to approach, then holds up its hand when SCROOGE is within two paces from the "window."]*

**NARRATOR.** At the raising of Marley's hand, Scrooge became aware of confused noises in the air; *[the CHORUS begins to wail]* sounds of lamentation and regret, sorrowful wailings. *[The GHOST joins in the wailing, then exits into the bleak night.]* Scrooge followed, trembling, to the window, desperate in his curiosity. He looked out. *[The CHORUS members fling their arms up, clutching, grasping, reaching, writhing and wailing.]* The air was filled with phantoms, wandering in restless haste and moaning as they went. Each wore chains like Marley's ghost. Their misery was, clearly, that they wished to intercede for good in human matters but had lost the power forever. Then the creatures faded into mist. *[The CHORUS melts back to positions, slowly.]* Scrooge flew to the door where the ghost had entered. It was double-locked, just as he had fastened it. The bolts were undisturbed.

*[SCROOGE tries to say, "Humbug," but stops at the first syllable.]*

**NARRATOR.** From the emotion of the visit or the fatigue of the day, or his glimpse of the invisible world, Scrooge went straight to bed without undressing and fell asleep on the instant.

### THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS

*[The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST approaches quietly from upstage and stands silently Up Left of Scrooge's bed.]*

**NARRATOR.** Scrooge awoke with the first stroke of a nearby church bell.

*[An Up Right CHORUS MEMBER turns and mimes the ringing of a large bell. (Optional: sound of a large bell)]*

SCROOGE. *[Looking Down and Down Right]* One! It was past two when I went to bed! It isn't possible that I've slept through a whole day and into another night.

NARRATOR. Then Scrooge remembered the Ghost's words.

SCROOGE. . . . a visitation when the bell tolls One.

NARRATOR. Lights flashed up in the room and the curtains of his bed were flung back.

*[The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST flings the "bed curtains" open as the CHORUS members throw their arms straight up, fingers spread, and exhale hoarsely, making the sound of a short burst of wind. The arms melt during the following action.]*

SCROOGE. Who . . . ? What are you?

PAST. The Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE. Long past?

PAST. The past of Ebenezer Scrooge.

SCROOGE. What brings you here?

PAST. Your welfare. Take heed! *[The SPIRIT touches Scrooge's arm.]* Rise and walk with me. *[The SPIRIT leads the man downstage. SCROOGE tries to pull back.]*

SCROOGE. Please! I'll fall!

PAST. Bear but a touch of my hand *there* *[touching Scrooge's heart]* and you shall be upheld in more than this.

NARRATOR. They stood instantly upon an open country road. *[The bedchamber is removed.]* The darkness and mist had vanished. It was a clear, cold winter day with snow upon the ground.

SCROOGE. *[Joyously]* Good heavens! I was born in this place. I was a boy here!

PAST. You remember the way?

SCROOGE. *[Moving toward Center]* Remember it? I could walk it blindfold.

**PAST.** Strange to have forgotten it for so many years.

**NARRATOR.** They walked along the road, Scrooge recognizing every gate and tree. At length, they came to a small boarding school.

*[The BOY SCROOGE enters from Left, then sits, Down Left, reading.]*

**PAST.** The school is not quite deserted. A single child, neglected by his friends, is left there alone on his Christmas holiday. You know his name.

**SCROOGE.** *[Sadly]* Yes. Poor boy.

**PAST.** Watch.

*[A frail, pretty GIRL runs from Right to the seated boy, throws her arms about him and kisses him.]*

**FANNY.** I have come to bring you home, dear brother, dear Ebenezer. To bring you home!

**BOY SCROOGE.** Home, little Fan?

**FANNY.** Yes, home for good. Home, for ever and ever. Father's so much kinder than he was that home's like heaven.

*[She begins to drag him toward the door; and he happily accompanies her off Right.]*

**FANNY.** *[Exiting]* You're never to come back here; we're to be together all the Christmas long and have the merriest time in all the world!

**PAST.** A delicate creature, your sister, whom a breath might have withered. Yet, her heart was warm.

**SCROOGE.** So it was.

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

**SCROOGE.** One child.

**PAST.** True — your nephew!

**SCROOGE.** *[Quietly]* Yes. *[Pause]*

**PAST.** What's the matter?

**SCROOGE.** Nothing.

**PAST.** Something, I think.

**SCROOGE.** I'd like to say a word or two to my nephew just now. And to my clerk, Bob Cratchit.