

DICKENS (ALSO READING FOR MALE PARTS, CRATCHIT AND FRED)

DICKENS: Now to just end the story. “And so as Tiny Tim observed, they lived happily ever after.” No, that one is overdone. How about “And so as Tiny Tim observed, Bah Humbug! Smiley face.” No, that is probably ahead of its time. What I need is something simple and pure. I got it! I know just how to end it. *(Finishes writing the last sentence)* I do hope everyone will like it. I guess we will soon see. *(HE closes the book and looks at his pocket watch)* Oh look at the time. I have places to go, people to see and things to do! I love Christmas!

DICKENS: Come with me and let me tell you a wonderful story. *(Crosses to bench, encouraging beggars to follow him, opens the book)* Once upon a time...of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve...old Ebenezer Scrooge sat in his counting house.

(SCROOGE and CRATCHIT enter. CRATCHIT lights SCROOGE's candle and then own with same match)

Scrooge had been partners for many years with Jacob Marley, so the firm was known as “Scrooge and Marley.” Now, Marley was dead to begin with. There is no doubt whatsoever about that. Yes, old Marley was as dead as a doornail. Scrooge never painted out old Marley's name. There it stood years afterward above the door: “Scrooge and Marley.”

[Tune Played: Hark the Harold Angels Sing]

(The KID CAROLERS sing as the VIOLINIST plays)

DICKENS: *(To SCROOGE)* Oh, but that Scrooge was a tightfisted old miser. Hard and sharp as flint---a grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, mean old sinner. And solitary as an oyster! *(To CRATCHIT)* Now Scrooge had a clerk named Bob Cratchit, and he paid the poor fellow, who had a wife and children, a salary that barely fed them.

SCROOGE: (ALSO FOR GHOSTS AND MALE PARTS)

What name is this? O, Ebenezer Scrooge, I ... No, spirit. No. No. Spirit hear me. I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I was. I will not be that man. (HE points to the headstone) If you assure me that I may yet change these shadows by an altered life, I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. O tell me I may wipe away the writing on this stone. Spare me! Spare me!

(HE puts his head in his hands and weeps. CHRISTMAS FUTURE exits as he does so. Silence. SCROOGE is alone. HE begins to come to HIS senses but speaks as if HE were still partly in a dream.)

SCROOGE: I will live in the past, the present and the future. I will not shut out the lessons they teach. The spirits of all three shall strive within me --- all three alive!

(The word "alive" cuts through HIS dream speech, and HE becomes fully conscious once more.)

That chair --- my own! This room --- my own room!

(HE regards his hand and then pinches HIMSELF in the growing realization that HE is indeed alive.)

I am alive! Oh, Jacob Marley, I am alive! Alive! Heaven and the Christmastime be praised! I say it on my knees! (*SCROOGE roams.*) I don't know what to do. I am as giddy as a drunken man! I am as light as a feather! I am as merry as a schoolboy!

(HE laughs.

I love...Christmas! (*to HIMSELF*) Yes....Yes I really do!

A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world!

(HE gets out his first big laugh, discovers how pleasant it feels, and experiments with other laughs more elegant, more intricate, louder.)

I don't know what time it is. I don't know what day it is. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind. I don't care. I'd rather be a baby! Because this is my chance to start over! And not a moment to lose...

(HE runs to the door and goes outside. Bells have begun to peel, and HE hears them for the first time.)

O glorious! Glorious!

MARLEY (ALSO FOR GHOSTS)

MARLEY: It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men, and travel far and wide. And if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. I am doomed to wander through the world to bear witness to what I might have shared on earth and turned to happiness! *(HE raises another cry)*

MARLEY: I wear the chains I forged in life. I made them link by link, and yard by yard, of my own free will. What a fool I was. What a fool you are. I tell you, the chain you bear yourself is as heavy and as long as this one forged seven Christmas Eves ago. And you have labored on it since. *(Wrapping the chain around SCROOGE's wrist, weighing him down)*

MARLEY: Mark me! In life, my spirit never roamed beyond the narrow confines of our money changing hole. Now I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. Oh, blind man! Ignorant man! Not to see.... Not to know....that each mortal life, however brief or small, has the power to bring mankind one step nearer to perfection. Not to understand that no amount of regret can make amends for a life of missed opportunities! Yet such was I! Oh, such was I!

YOUNG SCROOGE/FAN (ELEMENTARY AGE ROLES)

BOY SCROOGE: *(He reads aloud from the first chapter of Robinson Crusoe.)*
Robinson Crusoe, by Daniel Defoe. "I was born in the year 1632 in the city of York."

(Then a little girl appears, as if SCROOGE had wished her out of the past.
LITTLE FAN carefully comes up behind BOY SCROOGE to surprise him.)

SCROOGE: Oh, Little Fan!

LITTLE FAN: Dear, dear Ebenezer!

BOY SCROOGE: Dear sister!

LITTLE FAN: I came to bring you home, dear brother. To bring you home, home, home!

BOY SCROOGE: Home, Little Fan?

LITTLE FAN: Yes. Home for good! Home forever! Poor brother. Father was always so cruel to you, but now he's so much kinder and one night he spoke to me so gently, that I just had to ask him again if you might come home for Christmas. And he said, "Yes." And that you are never to return here again. From now on, we'll be together all Christmas long and have the merriest time in all the world!

BOY SCROOGE: You are quite a woman, Little Fan.

TINY TIM & BOB CRATCHIT (5-6 YEARS OLD)

TINY TIM: I hoped the people saw me in church. Because it might be good to remember on Christmas Day who made the lame to walk and the blind to see.

CRATCHIT: He's growing so strong and healthy. (PETER, NED, and SALLY enter with the goose, to hurrahs and fanfares from all quarters. Everyone descends on the table and prepares for the feast.) There never was such a goose! A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us.

TINY TIM: (After the others have spoken) God bless us, everyone!

BELLE/YOUNG SCROOGE (TEEN/YOUNG ADULT ROLES)

YOUNG SCROOGE: Belle, please. You must believe me. This matters a great deal to me!

BELLE: It matters little to you. Very little. Another idol has displaced me. If it can comfort you in time to come, as I would have done, I have no cause to grieve.

YOUNG SCROOGE: What idol has displaced you?

BELLE: A golden one.

YOUNG SCROOGE: Oh, I see... *(After a pause)* There is nothing the world hates more than poverty --- yet nothing it professes to hate more than the pursuit of wealth.

BELLE: You heed the world too much.

YOUNG SCROOGE: What? Because I have grown richer? I have not changed towards you. *(Angrily and threatening HER with the cane)* Have I? *(Realizing what HE has done, softens and lowers the cane)* Have I?

BELLE: The promise we made is now an old one. It was made when we were both poor and I, for one, was content to be so. You are changed. When it was made...

YOUNG SCROOGE: I was a boy.

BELLE: If we had never made that promise to each other, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no....

YOUNG SCROOGE: You think not?

BELLE: I would gladly think otherwise if I could, heaven knows! But if you were free today, can I believe that you would choose a girl without a dowry? You, who weigh everything by profit? *(SHE looks at the locket)*
I release you. I know you will forget me as an unprofitable dream. May you be happy in

the life you have chosen. (*SHE throws the locket into the violin case of the musician and while crying, SHE hurriedly exits.*)

SCROOGE and YOUNG SCROOGE: (*Crying out together*) Belle!