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Cast of Characters

NARRATOR #1

NARRATOR #2

JAKE MARLEY

THE SCROOGE

BOB CRATCHIT

BED-HEADED FRED

SOLICITOR #1

SOLICITOR #2

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

YOUNG SCROOGE

BELLE

BELLE'S HUSBAND

THE GHOST OF A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

MRS. CRATCHIT

TIMMY LOO HOO

(BED-HEADED) FRED'S WIFE

VOICE AT PARTY #1

VOICE AT PARTY #2

VOICE AT PARTY #3

VOICE AT PARTY #4

SVEN, The Ghost of Christmas Future (*Non-speaking)

A BOY

A MAID

OLD FEZZIWIG (*Non-speaking)

Character Notes

There are also many other group roles like: Street people, Rock Band Members, Swooning Girls, Dancers, The Neds, The Cratchit Children, The Party People, and others.

It is expected in this play that actors may take on multiple roles. The roles of Narrator #1, Narrator #2, and The Scrooge would be very difficult to double. Actors can be doubled, tripled, (or even quadrupled) into most all of the other roles as the needs of any given production warrant. It is possible to perform this show with as few as 10 actors and perhaps fewer. Quick costume and character changes add to the whimsy of the show.

The characters of The Ghost of Christmas Past, The Ghost of Christmas Present (and perhaps even Sven) are written in male gender, however these roles could certainly be played female and it is permissible to change those parts of dialogue that will allow changes like this to make sense.

Disclaimer

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A SEUSSIFIED CHRISTMAS CAROL

(ONE-ACT)

by Peter Bloedel

NARRATOR #1. We're happy you made it.

NARRATOR #2. We're so glad you're here.

NARRATOR #1. You're all just in time for some Christmasy cheer.

NARRATOR #2. Ah. Christmas cheer.

NARRATOR #1. That's right.

NARRATOR #2. Think of it all.

NARRATOR #1. Egg nog,

NARRATOR #2. ...And Ham.

NARRATOR #1. Christmas cookies.

BOTH. The mall.

NARRATOR #1. Baggages.

NARRATOR #2. Packages.

NARRATOR #1. Boxes...

NARRATOR #2. ...and bows.

NARRATOR #1. A tinsely reindeer knit sweater?

BOTH. Who knows?

NARRATOR #2. What about fruitcake, or stuffing stuffed chickens?

NARRATOR #1. What about Sant-y, or old Charles Dickens?

NARRATOR #2. Ah Yes! Charles Dickens! Why after the first,
He's the second most Christmas-y writer on Earth.

NARRATOR #1. *A Christmas Carol*.

NARRATOR #2. Now there's a good story,

NARRATOR #1. ...And, happens to be in our play inventory.

NARRATOR #2. It's not that Old Dickens can't be understood,
But we think some rhyming might make him more good.

NARRATOR #1. We've trimmed the plot down.

NARRATOR #2. A few words got a tweak.

NARRATOR #1. It might sound a little like Dr. Seuss speak.

NARRATOR #2. Not that we're planning to do that.

NARRATOR #1. I'll say!

BOTH. This is a Dickens-y show all the way.

NARRATOR #1. With all of that said...

NARRATOR #2. After all of that yackin'...

NARRATOR #1. Let's start the story.

BOTH. It's time to get crackin'.

NARRATOR #2. The Scrooge was a bona fide all-people-hater.
A classic begrudger, and Christmas deflator.

THE SCROOGE. I can't stand the people, their cheer or their toys...
And Oh, the noise! The Noise, Noise, Noise, Noise!!!!

(A small office appears. The Scrooge's clerk is sitting at a small desk trying to warm himself with a candle. THE SCROOGE enters the area and sits at a desk where he can keep an eye on his clerk.)

NARRATOR #2. Now people don't know why The Scrooge was so icky,

NARRATOR #1. So mean and so coarse,

NARRATOR #2. So prickly, so sticky.

NARRATOR #1. It could be his heart was two sizes too small.

NARRATOR #2. Or maybe it just wasn't installed at all.

NARRATOR #1. *(Indicating CRATCHIT sitting in the office:)* This is
Bob Cratchit The Scrooge's poor clerk.

THE SCROOGE. Get busy Cratchit I pay you to *work*.
I don't pay people to sit there and fidget.

CRATCHIT. I'm sorry, Sir. I was just warming my digits.

THE SCROOGE. Not with my candle! That cost a buck fifty.
I got the slow burning kind, 'cuz I'm thrifty.

CRATCHIT. Well, Sir perhaps with some coal for the fire...

THE SCROOGE. What! So that you can just sit and perspire?
Can't stand the cold? Well then "look" there's the door!
Besides, too much heat in here ruins the decor.

(BED-HEADED FRED enters. His hair is mashed on one side and sticking out on the other.)

NARRATOR #2. In for a visit is Bed-Headed Fred.

NARRATOR #1. He had the day off and just got out of bed.

NARRATOR #2. Fred is a cheerful and well rested chap.

NARRATOR #1. It's Christmas time. Plus he just had a good nap.

BED-HEADED FRED. Good Uncle "The Scrooge," Merry Christmas to you.

THE SCROOGE. (*Handing BED-HEADED FRED a comb:*) Bah! Humbug, Nephew! Try combing that "doo."

(BED-HEADED FRED *takes the comb and puts it in his hair and leaves it there.*)

BED-HEADED FRED. Christmas a humbug? You can't be that gruff.

THE SCROOGE. How are you merry? You're still poor enough.

BED-HEADED FRED. A good Christmas nap gave my hair staying power.

But what about you? You're quite rich and still sour.

THE SCROOGE. Now, Nephew, shoo! Don't waste my time. Keep Christmas your way, and I'll keep it mine.

BED-HEADED FRED. But, Uncle. You don't keep it. Come, let's be real.

THE SCROOGE. What good has it done you? I mean what's the deal?

BED-HEADED FRED. Christmas! It's like we're all on the same train, Of goodwill, and joy, and hair unrestrained.

(CRATCHIT *starts to applaud* BED-HEADED FRED.)

THE SCROOGE. Hey-ma-na! Whoa! Zip, zip! Watch it there, Bob! One more peep from you and bye-bye to your job.

BED-HEADED FRED. Come, Uncle Scrooge.

THE SCROOGE. Uncle *The* Scrooge to you.

BED-HEADED FRED. Join us for dinner tomorrow. Please do.

THE SCROOGE. No.

BED-HEADED FRED. Come on.

THE SCROOGE. Nuh-uh.

BED-HEADED FRED. Please?

THE SCROOGE. Nein.

BED-HEADED FRED. There's a feast.

THE SCROOGE. Not a chance.

BED-HEADED FRED. We'll let you carve the roast beast.

THE SCROOGE. (*Pauses to think.*) Not that I wouldn't love that, yes indeed.

(*Back to his normal rotten self:*)

Nice try. I wouldn't love that. Now please leave.

BED-HEADED FRED. Well, it seems, Uncle, you've made your decision. Just thought you'd want time off from your long division.

THE SCROOGE. Good afternoon.

BED-HEADED FRED. Merry Christmas and cheer!

THE SCROOGE. Good afternoon!

BED-HEADED FRED. (*To CRATCHIT:*) And a Happy New Year!

CRATCHIT. (*To FRED:*) Merry Christmas and a Happy...

THE SCROOGE. Cratchit!

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge had a head and he needed to scratch it.

THE SCROOGE. (*Aside:*) The wages I pay my clerk ought to be painful, And yet he is cheerful. I'm going insane-ful.

(*Enter two charity SOLICITORS.*)

NARRATOR #2. These two are from Frum-ditty-frum-dum-berg.

NARRATOR #1. It's one of the subiest sub most sub suburbs. They came to The Scrooge's firm right through his door,

NARRATOR #2. Looking for stuff to collect for the poor.

SOLICITOR #1. Mister The Scrooge in this festivous season, Many are hungry...

SOLICITOR #2. In need without reason.

SOLICITOR #1. They have no presents.

SOLICITOR #2. No Christmas tree stars.

BOTH. Their poor Christmas trees have no stars upon thars.

SOLICITOR #1. Hundreds of thousands want common provisions.

THE SCROOGE. What of the workhouses? Are there no prisons?

SOLICITOR #2. Plenty of prisons.

SOLICITOR #1. There are. Yes indeedy.

THE SCROOGE. Then send them all there! Can't you see that I'm greedy?

SOLICITOR #2. We come here because your abundance rejoices.

SOLICITOR #1. *(Using a smooth radio announcer-type voice:)* And to seduce you with our bassy voices.

SOLICITOR #2. From you what small offering might we entice?

THE SCROOGE. *(A bit seduced:)* I won't give a dime. But your voices are nice.

(Snapping out of it—back to his normal rotten self:)

Prisons and work houses. Those I supply.

SOLICITOR #1. But many can't go there...

SOLICITOR #2. And would rather die.

THE SCROOGE. Then they'd better do it, and spare our whole nation,
From the weak and the surplus population.

(The two SOLICITORS look at each other, shrug and leave. Bells toll the hour [or better yet some zany bell sound or whistle effect more befitting the play]. It is time to close the shop.)

THE SCROOGE. Tomorrow I suppose you'll want off of work.

CRATCHIT. If it's convenient.

THE SCROOGE. Just me and no clerk?

Bah!

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge, although crabby, gave in to some weakness.

NARRATOR #2. And let Cratchit have his full day off for Christmas.

(People appear outside of the office in the street. They are jolly despite the cold and again doing things that are in preparation for Christmas.)

NARRATOR #2. Then just out the door, Cratchit found an air pocket, and flew down the street like a heat-seeking rocket.

(CRATCHIT dances with people in the street and plays with children as he makes his way off-stage.)

THE SCROOGE. Perhaps if I scowl enough and show distaste,
These goody good fools will get out of my face.

(THE SCROOGE wanders through the merry people on the streets, scowling and snapping at them. The people are obviously scared of him and keep their distance. Some mock him, but none of this bothers THE SCROOGE. The firm office disappears and the door to The Scrooge's house appears.)

NARRATOR #1. To cut through the crowds full of mirth was a chore,
But before long The Scrooge faced his own door.

(JAKE MARLEY's face is where the doorknocker should be.)

THE SCROOGE. At last it's my door. It's the door to my place.
But this time the knocker looks like it's...

JAKE MARLEY. A face?

(THE SCROOGE jumps back and is absolutely startled.)

THE SCROOGE. YOW!

A talking doorknocker. What are the chances?

It gave me a scare. Now I need to change pantses.

(The doorknocker turns back to normal. Jake Marley's face is gone.

THE SCROOGE notices this, shrugs and continues into his home.)

NARRATOR #2. The Scrooge was now tired and went up to sleep.
He liked the darkness because it was cheap.

NARRATOR #1. He walked in the dark to his chamber like normal,
But something was different, a bit paranormal.

NARRATOR #2. So this time he gave a concerned look around,
And took little peeks as he donned his night gown.

(He puts on a night gown.)

NARRATOR #1. Then there was a noise from the bowels...

(THE SCROOGE grabs his stomach as if it might be upset, not
sure if the noise is supposed to be coming from inside himself. He's
a little confused.)

...of his house.

(He's not confused anymore.

A ghostly noise is heard.)

THE SCROOGE. Some creature is here. Something big. Not a mouse.
That ghostly like groaning makes me most unsteady.
And I had to change my pants one time already.

(The ghost of JAKE MARLEY walks in while THE SCROOGE is
distracted explaining his apparel to the audience. JAKE MARLEY
is wearing a particularly gaudy outfit. He's not particularly scary.
He has a "street smart," east coast accent.)

Well technically speaking I now have a gown on.
And I'm not ashamed, it's no thing to get down on...

JAKE MARLEY. ...BOO!

(THE SCROOGE takes a big jump back and is startled.)

THE SCROOGE. Ahhhh! Please don't...Wait a sec. Whoa. Who are
you?

JAKE MARLEY. You'll never guess, dude.

THE SCROOGE. Jake Marley renewed,
My dead business partner, whose gravestone said RIP.
Jake, you seem eighty-five percent more "hip."

JAKE MARLEY. Try Eighty-five point six repeating instead.
That's how much more "hip" I am now that I'm dead.
What? What's the problem? Are you misbelieving?

THE SCROOGE. Yes. It's true. I don't believe what I'm seeing.
I'd like to believe in you, Jake, but I can't.
My brain, I'm afraid, is ghost intoler-ant.

JAKE MARLEY. What can I do then to prove that I've passed.
How 'bout I give you this buck?

(JAKE MARLEY *hands* THE SCROOGE *a dollar*.)

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge Gaspd.

THE SCROOGE. (*Aside:*) Jake wouldn't give me a buck.

NARRATOR #2. The Scrooge choked.

THE SCROOGE. Okay, I believe you. I now know you're croaked.

JAKE MARLEY. When my death certificate got its last stamp,
I was sent straight off to ghost haunting camp.
That's where they told me that I would be bearing
Clothes, that in life, I would not be caught wearing.
In life, my greed bought me this yuck-tastic outfit.
In death it went on.

THE SCROOGE. And you won't take it off yet?

JAKE MARLEY. Dude, it don't come off! And you're in big trouble,
'Cuz the suit that you're buying is worser by double.

THE SCROOGE. Stop now! How calmly you stand there and tell this.
You've made my heart sink all the way to my pelvis.
Is that why you came, interrupting my peace,
To say what a nerd I'll be when I'm deceased?
Because of the things here on earth I transgress,
I'll be forced into after-death fashion excess?

JAKE MARLEY. That was part one, dude. Now here comes part two.

THE SCROOGE. Stop calling me dude. It's the least you could do.

JAKE MARLEY. Scrooge.

THE SCROOGE. No. It's *The Scrooge*.

JAKE MARLEY. Big deal. It's the same.

THE SCROOGE. *The Scrooge* is much cooler. My Rock and Roll name. I've had it since I was a teen in a band.

JAKE MARLEY. I think that we're getting ahead of the plan.
We'll deal with your past in this play, Ebenezer.
And see how you went from rock idol to geezer.
But first, like I said, there is a part two.
Three other spirits are gonna haunt you.

THE SCROOGE. *(Trying to show Jake the door:)* Oh, that's okay. I pass.
Well...thanks for coming.
Take care of that suit now. It really is stunning.

JAKE MARLEY. You have yet a chance of escaping my fate,
Of wearing a suit that you'll forever hate.

THE SCROOGE. I have a chance? Tell me how so I know.

JAKE MARLEY. You gotta get haunted three times in a row.
I thought I just said that. What, did I whisper?

THE SCROOGE. No, I heard you. I'm just not a good listener.

JAKE MARLEY. Scrooge, you old pansy, man up, and take warning.
The first ghost is coming at one in the morning.

THE SCROOGE. One in the morning! That's a disappointment.

JAKE MARLEY. They're haunting you, Scrooge. You don't get an
appointment.

Ghost number two will be here the next night,
At the same time...so don't get uptight.
The following midnight the last ghost will be here,
And hopefully then you'll be seeing more clear.

(JAKE MARLEY checks his watch.)

Oh, look at the time! I'll be seein' you, Scout.
I've got some more people to haunt and freak-out.

(MARLEY exits in some fantastical way. THE SCROOGE is left alone. He lays down on his bed.)

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge was now tired and went to lay down.

NARRATOR #2. But then in his bed he just flip flopped around.

NARRATOR #1. He could be snoozin' there flat on his back
If he drank some milk from the Yaks of Pekack.

NARRATOR #2. Pekack Yaks have milk that will put you to sleep.
Just drink a glass down and then start counting sheep.

NARRATOR #1. Those Yaks themselves count Pekack sheep profusely,
And mustn't be mixed-up with things Dr. Seussly.

NARRATOR #2. Seuss stuff is nothing like this.

NARRATOR #1. No indeed.

BOTH. One hundred and thirty percent guaranteed.

NARRATOR #2. The clock then struck one. What a horrible sound.

(The bell tolls one.)

THE SCROOGE. One o'clock! Ha! And there's no one around.
I was a fool. Could I be so blind?
There is no haunting...

(THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST shows up. It is a funky little ghost done up in rock and roll attire.)

PAST. Hi there.

THE SCROOGE. ...Never mind.

PAST. Sorry I'm late. I tried to be quick.
My car kept on stalling, 'cuz I don't drive stick.
I am the ghost of Christmases past.

THE SCROOGE. Look I'm kinda tired could we make this fast?

PAST. You don't fly, so I brought this stuff along.
It's anti-gravity spray...and it's strong.

(PAST sprays THE SCROOGE with the anti-gravity spray.)

THE SCROOGE. You mean I can fly now?

PAST. Well...you should *fall* slower.
Your rate of descent might be just a bit lower.

THE SCROOGE. *(Grabbing the can of spray and reading it:)* This spray
is just rated for 25 pounds.

PAST. Fine. Have it your way, we'll stay on the ground.
Just take my hand. Into your hist-ry we'll go.
We'll travel through walls and through time.

THE SCROOGE. Cool!

PAST. I know.

(YOUNG SCROOGE appears. He is in his late teens. He's singing in a band at a Christmas party. Lots of people are dancing. He has long luxurious hair...and is tan.)

THE SCROOGE. We're here at a party?

PAST. That quick.

THE SCROOGE. How bizarre.

If you can do that, why do you drive a car?

PAST. Chicks (*Dudes*) dig the car. It's a must for ghost dating.
Plus there's a good afterlife safety rating.

THE SCROOGE. Why I can't believe it. I'm there with my band.

PAST. You're there with your voice, and your hair...

THE SCROOGE. And a tan!

Hairy and tan—with my new rock persona!
I was "The Scrooge" from the band "Love Bologna!"

PAST. You played for the Christmas dance.

THE SCROOGE. Oh that was big.

PAST. It was thrown by your manager.

(OLD FEZZIWIG jumps out of the crowd and starts to dance with agility.)

THE SCROOGE. Old Fezziwig!

*(YOUNG SCROOGE belts out a high note on his microphone.
The crowd goes wild...especially a cadre of GIRLS dancing and
squealing near the stage.)*

Wow! Hear those high notes? I had quite a range.
Right hand on the mic, while the left strokes my mane.

*(YOUNG SCROOGE runs his left hand through his own hair.
The GIRLS squeal.)*

That's how you do it. That makes the girls squeal.
That's what you call rock and roll—Seuss appeal.

*(The NARRATORS pop in, each with a wine glass filled with a
brown syrupy liquid.)*

NARRATOR #1. Alright he did it.

NARRATOR #2. The word Seuss was mentioned.

NARRATOR #1. But that was just a clever word play invention.

NARRATOR #2. This play is not Seuss-y.

NARRATOR #1. It's Dickens-y mostly.

NARRATOR #2. And so to Dickens we propose a toasty.

NARRATOR #1. We raise our glasses...

NARRATOR #2. Both filled about half-ses...

NARRATOR #1. And slurp with the masses...

NARRATOR #2. These cups of molasses.

NARRATOR #1. Old Dickens surpasses...

NARRATOR #2. Authors of all classes...

NARRATOR #1. And rises like gasses...

NARRATOR #2. From composted grasses.

BOTH. Right to the top of our list of good writers.

(They both drink the liquid. They find it disgusting.)

NARRATOR #1. Not good molasses.

NARRATOR #2. Let's go try the ciders.

(The NARRATORS again join the party.)

PAST. Ah! Look at what the young you is doing.
You're no longer singing. It looks like you're wooing.
You're popular now from all what I can tell.

THE SCROOGE. Oh, goodness me. Could that be my Belle?

(BELLE is a pretty girl standing near YOUNG SCROOGE with a pen and a pad of paper for autographs.)

BELLE. You're a great singer. I'm not even joking.

YOUNG SCROOGE. No offense. *Growl!* But I think you're smokin'!
Do you want my autograph? It's just one letter.

(He takes her pen and signs a big letter "S" on her paper.)

BELLE. Actually, I thought that this would be better.

(BELLE kisses YOUNG SCROOGE.)

YOUNG SCROOGE. *(Taken aback:)* My body has seventeen trillion
and nine,
Neurons all firing at the same time.

BELLE. Oh, sorry about that. Perhaps that was naughty.
That kiss might have meant less if I weren't a hotty.

YOUNG SCROOGE. My mind is a race car called mental abstraction.

BELLE. Perhaps it's a chemical love type reaction.

YOUNG SCROOGE. It compels me to get down on one knee.

(He does.)

Dearest...uh...what's your name?

BELLE. Belle.

YOUNG SCROOGE. Marry me?

THE SCROOGE. I was engaged.

PAST. Let's fast forward a skosh.

Your new love of money has made you less close.

(BELLE and YOUNG SCROOGE quickly change clothes. BELLE is wearing a Seussified mourning dress and YOUNG SCROOGE is now a young businessman. His hair is shorter and he is less tan...conservative...but still Seussy.)

BELLE. What's happened to you, Scrooge? You used to be fun.

YOUNG SCROOGE. It's *The* Scrooge.

BELLE. Oh please!

YOUNG SCROOGE. Hey! There's work to be done.

BELLE. The Scrooge was your stage name, but you quit the band. Your life is becoming tight waddish and bland.

YOUNG SCROOGE. I've kept the stage name. It intimidates fools. Just ask my employees. And plus, it's still cool.

BELLE. You're getting cooler towards me, that's for sure. A new lover has you despite my allure.

YOUNG SCROOGE. What other lover? There's no one. That's funny.

BELLE. Here's a hint, Scrooge. Her name rhymes with...**MONEY!**

(YOUNG SCROOGE still isn't getting it. He pauses and scratches his head.)

YOUNG SCROOGE. Bunnie? Sunny? Honey? Help me out.

BELLE. It's *money*, you dope! Is your brain in a drought?

YOUNG SCROOGE. Oh sure. You mock it, my newly found wise-ness. But poverty sucks, and that's why I'm in bize-ness.

BELLE. If your money and I were both tied to some tracks,
And a choo-choo was coming from western Van Pax.
What would you save first, your money or me?

(Pause.)

YOUNG SCROOGE. Give me a minute to weigh carefully.

BELLE. Not the right answer.

YOUNG SCROOGE. I'm thinking it over.

BELLE. I release you to your "real life" lover.

(BELLE exits. Sobbing. YOUNG SCROOGE is discouraged and exits in the opposite direction.)

PAST. Ouch. That was harsh.

(THE SCROOGE is tearful too.)

THE SCROOGE. Spirit, this whole thing blows.
Take me home now. I must go wipe my nose.

PAST. Just one more glimpse to the past, Ebenezer.
Here is your Belle with a husband who pleased her.
They'd twenty children and named them all Ned.

BELLE. (Calling:) Yoo-hoo! Ned!

(In run a bunch of cast members of all sizes dressed as children.
They all have yellow wigs on. They huddle around BELLE and her
HUSBAND. They are all clearly very happy.)

PAST. This might not be all of them. Some are in bed.
But mostly it's because our cast is too small.
We couldn't find wigs enough to fit them all.

BELLE'S HUSBAND. Honey.

BELLE. Yes, dear.

BELLE'S HUSBAND. Guess who I saw today.

BELLE. I can't guess. Was it my old fiancé?

BELLE'S HUSBAND. I walked past his firm, he seemed even more
loathsome.

I just can't imagine a person more lonesome.

BELLE and ALL OF THE KIDS. Awwwwwww.

(Lights go down on BELLE and her FAMILY. They exit.)

THE SCROOGE. (Sobbing:) Enough of this junk I can't take any more.
Haunt me no more. Take me back, I implore.

PAST. Don't blame me. This is *your* past as it happened.

THE SCROOGE. Bring my bed back. I need some more nappin'.

NARRATOR #1. And so with a snap...

(PAST snaps his fingers, and The Scrooge's bed appears. He falls
down on it and goes instantly to sleep.)

NARRATOR #2. The Scrooge went back to bed.

NARRATOR #1. With visions of Belle and her kids all named Ned.

NARRATOR #2. Now that might sound Seussy to you...

BOTH. But that's bogus!

NARRATOR #1. We'd never do that.

NARRATOR #2. Unless someone controlled us.
To Seussify Dickens would ruin the aesthetic.

NARRATOR #1. The actors would need to be twice as athletic,
(A clock tower strikes one.)

NARRATOR #1. Ah, there's the cue.

NARRATOR #2. Time for ghost number two.

NARRATOR #1. His outfit's outrageous.

NARRATOR #2. Be back in two pages.
(The NARRATORS skip off.)

THE SCROOGE. Well there's the bell...and no ghost again. Bah!
Are ghosts always late? Perhaps they...

(THE GHOST OF A CHRISTMAS PRESENT stands behind THE SCROOGE. This is a spirit with a very jolly disposition and is dressed up like an actual Christmas present complete with wrapping paper and bows. THE SCROOGE doesn't see the ghost and is startled when it says...)

PRESENT. Ta-da!

THE SCROOGE. Yipes! You guys need to come when the bell dings.
Haunting and startling are two different things.
I like your outfit. I find it most pleasant.

PRESENT. I am The Ghost of a Christmas Present.

THE SCROOGE. A play on words.

PRESENT. Get it?

THE SCROOGE. Yeah. I got the drift.

PRESENT. 'Cuz the present means "now" and...

THE SCROOGE. *(Simultaneously:)* You're dressed like a gift.

PRESENT. *(Simultaneously:)* I'm dressed like a gift...

PRESENT. ...Yeah, a present.

THE SCROOGE. That's very clever. Did you think of that?

PRESENT. Aw. Just an idea I pulled from my hat.

THE SCROOGE. Hm... Nice.

(There is a weird awkward pause.)

PRESENT. Well...why don't you touch some of my wrapping paper,
And we'll begin our Christmas "presenty" caper.

*(THE SCROOGE touches the spirit's wrapping paper and they
begin to walk into a street scene. People fill the streets.)*

NARRATOR #1. Into the streets the two of them trod,

NARRATOR #2. But no one could see their invisible bods.

*(Bob Cratchit's house appears. His CHILDREN and WIFE are
setting the table to eat.)*

THE SCROOGE. What house is this?

PRESENT. It's the house of your clerk.

THE SCROOGE. The one that I underpay and overwork?

PRESENT. Correct.

THE SCROOGE. Cratchit?

PRESENT. Exactly.

THE SCROOGE. Do you mean Bob?

PRESENT. YES! He's so poor all his children have jobs.
Ringo's a lawyer and Sally's a dentist,
And Buff is a garbage collector's apprentice.
Tuley builds houses, and Jen fixes cars.
And Nip studies meteors that fall from Mars.

*(In walks BOB CRATCHIT carrying his crippled son LITTLE
TIMMY LOO HOO. TIMMY carries a crutch and braces are on his
legs. Having Little Timmy played by an actual adult actor is an option.)*

FAMILY. Father! Timmy!

CRATCHIT. Merry Christmas, my family.

THE SCROOGE. What child is with Bob? Is *he* employed gainfully?

PRESENT. That's Little Timmy Loo Hoo in the mix.
He's just a surgeon, and that's 'cuz he's six.
All of them work. They work all the time.
But since they're just kids they won't make but a dime.

THE SCROOGE. Timmy Loo Hoo. Why does he have a crutch?

PRESENT. His legs don't walk good, at least not good that much.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Lord Bless you now, Bob, and sit down for dinner.
It's Christmas time and so our dinner's a winner.
Here on our menu let me introduce,
The main course of all. Our binka bird goose.

(MRS. CRATCHIT *lifts a cover off of a plate upon which sits a tiny little roasted bird. The whole FAMILY is astonished at the bird and simultaneously join in saying:*)

FAMILY. Ooooooooooooo.

THE SCROOGE. There's not too much meat on that bird...just a smidgen.

PRESENT. A binka bird goose is the size of a pigeon.

CRATCHIT. Oh, Mother! You've done it. That binka bird goose is The best one I've seen served with zoot fruited juices. Let us say grace for these Christmas provisions.

(*The CRATCHITS bow their heads at the table.*)

THE SCROOGE. That can't feed their family. What are they magicians?

MRS. CRATCHIT. Will you carve the bird, Bob? This knife will suffice it.

THE SCROOGE. That can't feed them.

PRESENT. That depends how you slice it.

THE SCROOGE. Have they no public food shelf that will listen?

PRESENT. What of the workhouses? Are there no prisons?

THE SCROOGE. Hey.

PRESENT. See what I did there?

THE SCROOGE. Yes. Those words are mine.

PRESENT. In haunting school we learned that stuff all the time. It's called a guilt trip.

THE SCROOGE. Yes. I know what it's called.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Better start carving. Don't let it get cold.

CRATCHIT. (*Carving:*) Lovely. We all should get one piece of meat, That's one inch, by one inch, by an eighth inch deep.

THE SCROOGE. What! That's insane! That would not fill *my* tummy! That's sorta like eating just one pepperoni. Look how they savor it, and how they're grateful.

PRESENT. Even though they hardly have half a plateful. But don't be alarmed by all of this gratitude. Mrs. C's about to cop a big attitude.

CRATCHIT. (*Raising his glass:*) Ah! What a meal with which our chins are greased. A toast to The Scrooge. The king of the feast.

MRS. CRATCHIT. The Scrooge! Our feast's king? Oh that's a good one.

I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast on.

CRATCHIT. Now, now, dear. Think of the children. It's Christmas.

MRS. CRATCHIT. It better be Christmas to toast that man's grimness. That stingy old, crusty old, miserly doofus.

I'll drink to him, Bob, for your sake and not his-es.

(Glasses raised:)

Cheers to the Scrooge...whose life is deficient.

May he live just as long as is sufficient.

CRATCHIT. And may God bless...

LITTLE TIMMY LOO HOO. God bless us, every one.

FAMILY. Blessings to each of us under the Son.

(The Cratchit Home fades away.)

THE SCROOGE. Aw...Timmy Loo Hoo is a dear cutie pie.

Tell me now spirit...is he going to die?

PRESENT. Na, Tim will live to be old and well fed.

No. I'm just kidding. The kid'll be dead.

THE SCROOGE. Say it's not so.

PRESENT. It's not so...but it's true.

THE SCROOGE. What's true? He'll die?

PRESENT. Yeah. But what's it to you?

He'd better die, and spare our whole nation,

From the weak and the surplus population.

THE SCROOGE. *(Shocked again by hearing his own words back to him:)*

What the...?

PRESENT. See what I did again? You said that earlier...

THE SCROOGE. *(Irritated:)* Guilt trip! I get it.

PRESENT. No need to get surlier.

Let's hear it for Christmas! Hip, hip, hooroo!

(Laughter is heard, but through the laughter THE SCROOGE hears a distinctive laugh that belongs to his nephew BED-HEADED FRED.)

THE SCROOGE. Wait a sec. I know that laughter. But who?

(BED-HEADED FRED and a number of his house guests appear on stage. It is now Bed-Headed Fred's house. It's his Christmas party. Everyone has just clearly eaten.)

BED-HEADED FRED and GUESTS. Ahhhhhh, ha, ha, ha!

THE SCROOGE. Why it's my nephew Fred.
Little Fan's son with the bed-headed head.

BED-HEADED FRED. He said to me Christmas time is a humbug!

FRED'S WIFE. (*Laughing:*) Well he's missing out, the old miserly lug.
We're having so much fun.

THE WHOLE PARTY. More fun by half!

BED-HEADED FRED. Now's when we throw our heads backward
and laugh.

(They all do, and they laugh in sync with one another. THE SCROOGE joins them in the laughter.)

THE WHOLE PARTY. Aaaaaaaaah, ha, ha, ha!

(Gasp...then sighing still in sync:)

Aaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.

FRED'S WIFE. I know a game we should play at this fling.
We all should play a game of "Guess the Thing."

THE WHOLE PARTY. We love "guess the thing!"

VOICE #1. It's the gamiest contest,
That we can think of...

VOICE #2. ...And helps our food to digest.

FRED'S WIFE. Fred you just think of a thing and we'll guess it.
Then you just stand there and "no it" or "yes it."
Thought of a thing?

BED-HEADED FRED. A thing I have thought.

FRED'S WIFE. Is it a juggling platypus?

BED-HEADED FRED. Not!

VOICE #3. A guffalo hoof?

BED-HEADED FRED. No.

VOICE #4. A dingo dog paddle?

BED-HEADED FRED. No.

FRED'S WIFE. A turnip squirrel riding a boom-boom side saddle?

BED-HEADED FRED. No.

VOICE #1. Is it a bongo boy smoking cigars?

BED-HEADED FRED. No.

VOICE #2. Give us a hint.

VOICE #3. What does it say?

(BED-HEADED FRED imitates something ferocious like a bear.)

BED-HEADED FRED. Rarrrrrr!

VOICE #4. I've got it! I see now through your subterfuge.

BED-HEADED FRED. What is it?

VOICE #4. It is your own...dear Uncle Scro-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-oge!

BED-HEADED FRED. Yes!

(All of them throw their heads backward and laugh in sync exactly as they did before.)

THE WHOLE PARTY. Aaaaaaaaaaah, ha, ha, ha!

(Gasp...then sighing:)

Aaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.

(THE SCROOGE is a little taken aback by their laughter seemingly at his expense.)

BED-HEADED FRED. He's made us all merry in our Christmas
leisure,

So let's raise a glass to my old Ebenezer.

To The Scrooge!

THE WHOLE PARTY. To The Scrooge!

BED-HEADED FRED. In spite of himself,
We wish him a Merry Christmas and good health.

(All Cheer. NARRATORS #1 and #2 enter. A bell tolls midnight and the party at Bed-Headed Fred's house fades away. THE SCROOGE faces the audience clearly thinking fondly of the party he has just witnessed.)

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge was so into the party,

NARRATOR #2. As acted.

NARRATOR #1. That he got a teensy bit over distracted.

(THE GHOST OF A CHRISTMAS PRESENT starts to walk off stage.)

NARRATOR #2. The spirit had left him and Scrooge would have
trapped him.

NARRATOR #1. He wanted so bad, with that ghost, to unwrap him.

NARRATOR #2. But most ghosts don't like getting unwrapped by men,

NARRATOR #1. And so he tag teamed with the next ghost named Sven.

(THE GHOST OF A CHRISTMAS PRESENT is just about off-stage, just as another ghost enters. This one is quite tall. It wears a long cloak and a futuristic space helmet. Other items about its accoutrements look very futuristic. The face of this spirit cannot be seen. The two ghosts high-five [tag] each other as one exits and the other enters.)

NARRATOR #2. Sven's a nice ghost.

NARRATOR #1. But he'll never speak to you.

NARRATOR #2. That's because folks from the future don't need to.

NARRATOR #1. It's just like you thought.

NARRATOR #2. In some high tech ways.
They speak with their thoughts using mind power rays.

(SVEN [the Ghost of Christmas future] stands looming right behind THE SCROOGE. THE SCROOGE has no idea.)

THE SCROOGE. Whoa. Who are you?

(The ghost pauses seeming even more ominous and then holds up a sign that says "Sven.")

THE SCROOGE. Are you the next spirit?

(SVEN nods.)

It looks like you come from the future...or near it?

(SVEN nods.)

THE SCROOGE. Uh...yeah. Okay. So...um. Do you speak?
If you could just say something that'd be sweet.

(SVEN points a strange space-aged looking gun at THE SCROOGE. THE SCROOGE is terrified at first but then he starts to hear something in his mind.)

THE SCROOGE. Hey. What? I read ya. I'm getting a signal.
It's faint.

(SVEN adjusts a knob on the gun.)

THE SCROOGE. No. Still Static-y.

(SVEN adjusts another knob on the gun.)

THE SCROOGE. (*Nodding and giving the thumbs up:*) Yeah. Coming in big now.

(*THE SCROOGE pauses for a moment to listen to SVEN's mind ray.*)

Roger that, Ghost-rider, ten-four, you betcha.

You're the Ghost of Christmas Future, I gotcha.

(*SVEN points his mind ray at THE SCROOGE again and pulls the trigger. The scene changes to Bob Cratchit's home. The CHILDREN and MRS. CRATCHIT are all sitting in their main room. They all look sad. One stool is empty and it has Timmy Loo Hoo's crutch resting against it.*)

THE SCROOGE. What vision is this? Oh good. Bob Cratchit's pad. This is fun seeing the future they've had.

THE SCROOGE. Wait a sec. What's with the oblong-ish faces? Stress from their jobs? Is that what the case is?

(*CRATCHIT enters.*)

FAMILY. (*Greeting him:*) Father!

CRATCHIT. (*Glad to see them, yet somber:*) My family! What a sweet chorus.

Yet one voice is missing and not heard before us.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Ah, Timmy's sweet voice, with it's dainty (*Or instead perhaps husky...or any other adjective that fits the voice of the actor*) tones,

Is quiet now and in the ground all alone.

THE SCROOGE. In the ground? What can they mean? What's the caper?

Did he quit his job and become a landscaper?

CRATCHIT. He's pushing up daisies.

THE SCROOGE. Ah ha! I knew it!

MRS. CRATCHIT. He bought the farm.

THE SCROOGE. I knew he could do it.

(*CRATCHIT and MRS. CRATCHIT seem to be trying to give THE SCROOGE hints that Little Timmy is dead even though "officially" they don't know that The Scrooge and Sven are in their midst.*)

MRS. CRATCHIT. Ashes to ashes.

CRATCHIT. Dust to dust.

THE SCROOGE. (*To SVEN:*) My yard has red cedar mulch. It's a must. But ash might be nice in a quaint garden space.

CRATCHIT. He's kicked the bucket.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Departed. Erased.

(Seeing that THE SCROOGE is still not understanding them, they become more emphatic and start to make actual eye contact with him.)

CRATCHIT. He bought the pine condo.

MRS. CRATCHIT. He's snuffed out and wasting.

THE SCROOGE. Wait a sec. Are they still talking landscaping?

FAMILY. No!

THE SCROOGE. Then what? Where's young Tim and his fair little head? I see his crutch and his chair and ...

FAMILY. He's dead!

THE SCROOGE. Oh. I think I'm tuckered from these haunting bouts.

MRS. CRATCHIT. Yeah. That took you way too long to figure out.

(CRATCHIT nudges her. She's not supposed to be able to see THE SCROOGE [Or SVEN].)

Not that I see you, if that's what you're thinking,
Because I don't...and that's why I'm winking.

(MRS. CRATCHIT gives a few cheesy and very obvious winks to THE SCROOGE. CRATCHIT nudges her again and abruptly tries to change the subject by launching into sobs of mourning for his poor little deceased son Timmy. The whole family sobs.)

CRATCHIT. *(Drying his eyes:)* My dears when we think of how patient and mild

Little Tim was as a surgeon...and child,
Let us hold back from each other all quarrels
In memory of Tim. Thus endeth the moral.

(The Cratchit house fades away.)

THE SCROOGE. Oh, Sven you space ghost of Christmas to come,
Are we nearly finished? 'Cuz I sure am bummed.
My heart has an ache full of sorrow and pain,
Wait, no. That's my hip. I think they're both sprained.

(SVEN points his mind ray at THE SCROOGE and a gravestone appears. SVEN points to it. THE SCROOGE reads the name on the gravestone. It clearly says: Ebenezer "The" Scrooge.)

What are the chances this corpse has a name
That's practically like mine...in fact it's the same.

NARRATOR #2. The Scrooge had a revelation in his head.

NARRATOR #1. He was the guy in the grave, and was dead.

(THE SCROOGE gets down on his knees and pleads with SVEN.)

THE SCROOGE. Take me back home, Sven. I'll change. I repent.
I'll be a new geezer, one-hundred percent.

NARRATOR #2. The Scrooge began thinking some thoughts that
were new.

THE SCROOGE. What if my thoughts about Christmas aren't true?
What if Christmas isn't quite so deplorable?
What if Christmas means a teensy bit more-able?

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge's heart grew three more sizes that
night.

NARRATOR #2. Or just got installed...

NARRATOR #1. ...Or got hooked up right.

NARRATOR #2. Whatever it was.

NARRATOR #1. At that very hour.

BOTH. The Scrooge was bestowed with CHRISTMAS SUPER-
POWERS!

*(THE SCROOGE lifts up SVEN and holds him above his head
[if this cannot be done, perhaps he opens up his shirt to reveal a
superhero outfit].)*

THE SCROOGE. This is fantastic. I just want to holler.
I feel like a new born baby...only taller.

(Putting SVEN down:)

Sven, thank you so much! I'm just drunk with joy.
Merry Christmas to all! And to all a...

*(A BOY walks by. SVEN gives THE SCROOGE the "thumbs up"
and then disappears.)*

...Hey boy!
What day is today?

BOY. What, are you serious?

THE SCROOGE. What a fine lad. Tell me sonny. I'm curious.

BOY. Why it's Christmas day!

THE SCROOGE. Christmas day?

BOY. Yes, that's right.

THE SCROOGE. All of the Ghosts freaked me out in one night.

I am as thrilled as a geezer can be.

Just one night has passed when I thought it was three.

I haven't missed Christmas. Those ghosts were hard at it.

An efficient, trifecta, Christmas haunt-o-matic.

Boy, there's a shop on the corner of Durkee.

BOY. The one with the ginormous mistletoed turkey?

THE SCROOGE. Yes, the prize bird. Has it been sold yet?

BOY. No, it's expensive. It comes from Tibet.

THE SCROOGE. Price is no matter. Go buy that bird. Scurry!

Have the man bring it back here in a hurry.

A shilling is yours if you're quick on this mission.

Faster and I'll pay your college tuition.

BOY. Right away, Sir. I'll be fast as a hatchet.

(The BOY runs off.)

THE SCROOGE. That bird will be fine for the family Cratchit!

(The BOY runs back on with two POULTERERS carrying a giant turkey.)

BOY. Here I am back with the bird that you wanted.

THE SCROOGE. Excellent job, my boy. Tuition granted.

(To the POULTERERS:)

Gents, here's a wad full of cash for your trouble.

Bring the bird to Cratchit's house on the double.

Then with the change, buy your wives something nice.

Make it expensive, and then buy it twice.

Ah! But that bird is too heavy for two.

We must have some people to come carry you!

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge clapped his hands and some strongmen arrived

To give the bird and the two poulterers a ride.

(The POULTERERS and the STRONGMEN exit as the stage fills with outdoor Christmas traffic. In pantomime we see THE SCROOGE greeting people, being generous and friendly.)

NARRATOR #2. Then through the streets The Scrooge skipped and he tripped.

He danced with young ladies. He turned them and dipped.

NARRATOR #1. People were shocked by his brand new condition.

NARRATOR #2. As he doled out cash-wads and paid for tuitions.

NARRATOR #1. But there was a residence The Scrooge was stalking.

NARRATOR #2. He passed the door twenty three times before knocking.

NARRATOR #1. And then when his courage surpassed all his fear.

BOTH. He knocked.

(The streets clear.

A MAID answers the door.)

THE SCROOGE. Excuse me. Is your master home, dear?

NARRATOR #1. The young girl gaped.

NARRATOR #2. And then squeaked out—

MAID. Yes.

He's in the dining room. So is the mistress.

(A pause of awkwardness. The maid is still gaping.)

THE SCROOGE. He knows me.

MAID. I know.

THE SCROOGE. May I see him, sweetie?

MAID. The whole town knows you... You're scary. Don't eat me.

THE SCROOGE. I was scary once but now I have new knowledge. That's why I'll pay for you to attend college.

(He hands her a big wad of money.)

MAID. Money for college. Is this all for me?

THE SCROOGE. Here have some more. Go get your PhD.

NARRATOR #1. From that Christmas day...

NARRATOR #2. Right from the start...

NARRATOR #1. The Scrooge single-handed...

BOTH. Made that city smart!

MAID. Thank'ee, Sir. Right this way.

(A party of people come into view. It's BED-HEADED FRED, and his Christmas party.)

THE SCROOGE. Happy to help.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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