

NODA PANTOMIMES

PRESENT

A Christmas Carol

The Panto

An original story of a bitter man restored by the spirit of
Christmas

By

Rob Fearn & Leo Appleton

Adapted from the short story by Charles Dickens

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Welcome to the second pantomime in our series.

The writing of A Christmas Carol – The Panto has been a lot of fun. We have both enjoyed the process and the story has certainly given us something to get our writing teeth into. With the addition of some supporting characters and a little liberty with the story itself Rob and I have been able to conjure up something that still contains all the ghostly elements of the original text whilst adding those parts necessary for it to succeed as a pantomime, with villains, heroes, good solid comedy characters and plenty of opportunity to shout out 'it's behind you' and boo or cheer in equal measure.

We have also added a little twist as well, imagining at least one of the characters as a puppet (hand held rod puppet) and think this story particularly lends itself to this kind of art (much like the West End musical Avenue Q).

Again, scenery and staging can be as minimalist or grand as you like but as it has potential for being a little grey would encourage making all the costumes as bright as possible to offset this. As always we understand that not everything we suggest will be possible and therefore would encourage groups to adjust elements as they see fit.

We hope you all enjoy it, at least half as much as we did in producing it.

Rob & Leo

CHARACTERS

Narrator (M or F) This person moves the plot along and acts with Rapsallion and the ghosts Jacob Marley and Sid Spectre. Can be either male or female but requires good comedy timing.

Rapsallion (M, F or puppet) This can be a young person, male or female or indeed a puppet and is the 'cheeky chappie'. (*If not a puppet then some lines will need to be amended*). Enjoys banter with all the comedy parts and Scrooge. Should be a character the children will engage with. Whoever plays this part must be confident in their lines with potential for ad libs and audience participation. This part is particularly effective with what is called a rod arm puppet.

Ebenezer Scrooge (M) The miserly owner of a London counting-house, a nineteenth century term for an accountant's office. The three spirits of Christmas visit the stodgy bean-counter in hopes of reversing Scrooge's greedy, cold-hearted approach to life. This is quite a demanding role and they must be able to act and put a song across.

Bob Cratchit (M) Scrooge's clerk. A kind, mild, and very poor man with a large family. Though treated harshly by his boss, Cratchit remains a humble and dedicated employee. Not a big part but is central to the plot and must be played convincingly as with all the Cratchits. Must be able to sing.

Tiny Tim (M or F) Bob Cratchit's young son, crippled from birth. Tiny Tim is a highly sentimentalized character who Dickens uses to highlight the tribulations of England's poor and to elicit sympathy from his middle and upper class readership. Can be played either by a young boy or girl and must be able to sing and although not a big part there is plenty of opportunity to extract sympathy from the audience and even one or two laughs.

Jacob Marley (M) In the living world, Ebenezer Scrooge's equally greedy partner. Marley died seven years before the narrative opens. He appears to Scrooge as a ghost condemned to wander the world bound in heavy chains. Marley hopes to save his old partner from suffering a similar fate. Part of the comedy duo in the show and is the foil for Sid Spectre's jokes. Appears throughout the show and must be able to sing and move.

Sid Spectre (M) Jacob Marley's ghostly comrade who is helping him make amends for his earthly deeds so that Jacob can rid himself of the chains that bind him. A bit officious and a little bossy but is a joker and has some funny lines. He is always on with Jacob. Again must be able to sing and move.

The Ghost of Christmas Past (M or F or younger teen). The first spirit to visit Scrooge. A curiously childlike apparition. He takes Scrooge on a tour of Christmases in his past. Although a serious part has some funny lines. This part can be male or

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female as it is not clear in the book what sex the ghost is and is often portrayed as a more feminine ghost.

The Ghost of Christmas Present (M or F). The second spirit to visit Scrooge, supposedly a majestic giant clad in a green robe. His / her lifespan is restricted to Christmas Day. He / she escorts Scrooge on a tour of his contemporaries' Holiday celebrations. This is a larger than life person – quite jolly – in fact almost a 'green' Father / Mother Christmas.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (Ol' Misery Guts) (M). The third and final spirit to visit Scrooge. A phantom, clad in a hooded black robe. He presents Scrooge with an ominous view of his lonely death. This is also the 'behind you' gag as well. Although a serious character by nature it is also a comedy character to save traumatising too many children. He is a bit of a 'lovey' as they say, sliding in and out of his two personas.

Fred (M). Scrooge's nephew. A genial man who loves Christmas. He invites Scrooge to his Christmas party each and every year, only to be refused by his grumpy Uncle. A fairly straight character who should be able to sing and move.

Clara (F). Fred's wife. A small female role seen with Fred at the Christmas party and should be able to sing and move.

Annie (F) Clara's sister. A small female role seen at Fred's party. Should be able to sing and move.

Topper (M) Fred's friend. A small male role present at Fred's Christmas party and is the slight 'love' interest for Annie. Should be able to sing and move.

Fezziwig (M) The jovial merchant with whom the young Scrooge is apprenticed. Fezziwig was renowned for his wonderful Christmas parties. Although a small part has a lovely little scene with his wife. Bouncy character and should be able to sing and dance.

Mrs Fezziwig (F). Fezziwig's wife. Small female role with some comic lines. Must be able to move and sing.

Belle (F). A beautiful woman / young lady who Scrooge loved deeply when he was a young man. Belle broke off their engagement after Scrooge became consumed with greed and the lust for wealth. She later married another man. A younger female who can act and sing, but should also be able to dance as well.

Mrs. Cratchit (F). Bob's wife, a kind and loving woman. A fairly straight part and must be able to sing and move.

Peter Cratchit (M). Bob's oldest son, who inherits his father's stiff-collared shirt for Christmas. A small male role suitable for a young teenager. Should be able to sing and move.

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Martha Cratchit (F). Bob's oldest daughter, who works in a milliner's shop. A part for an older teenager / young woman. Must be convincing as all the 'Cratchit' parts are very earnest. Should be able to sing and move.

Belinda (young F). A younger Cratchit daughter. A small role for a young girl to play. Must be able to sing and move.

Scrooge as a boy (M or F). We meet the young boy Ebenezer Scrooge at school during one of the 'spirits' visits. A lonely child even then longing for the love of his distant father. A young M or F will suffice for this part as it is none speaking and is seen only briefly.

Scrooge as a young teenager (M). We meet this version of Scrooge later in the spirits visit where he is again expecting to spend the holidays by himself. Fan his sister turns up to take him home. A young male who again must portray a convincing character. They can also portray Scrooge (as an older teenager) working at Fezziwig's and therefore will have a touching scene with Belle also.

Fan (F). Scrooge's sister; Fred's mother. In Scrooge's vision of Christmases past, he remembers Fan picking him up from school and walking him home. A small female role who appears briefly and has a small touching scene with young teenage Scrooge.

The Portly Gentlemen (or just gentlemen!) (M and /or F). Three gentlemen / women who visit Scrooge at the beginning of the tale seeking charitable contributions. Scrooge promptly throws them out of his office. Can be a mixture of male and female if necessary and are fairly comedic giving Scrooge plenty of chance to 'bah humbug' around the place.

Undertaker (M). Accompanies the two ladies to visit Old Joe to trade in his ill-gotten gains. It is a male part and can be played by a member of the chorus if necessary. Part of the comedy scene and joins in the singing and dancing so should be able to hold a tune and move.

Mrs Huggins (F). Scrooge's put upon housekeeper. This is a nice little character part and is also in one of the comedy scenes. Must be able to sing and move.

Mrs Dilber (F). A washerwoman with an eye for a bargain. As with Mrs Huggins it is a nice little character / comedy role and must be able to sing and move.

Old Joe (M). The old rag seller with an eye for profit! A small male character / comedy part. Must be able to act, sing and move.

Man 1, 2, and 3 (all Male). They used to know Scrooge when he was 'alive'. Small male roles and can be interspersed with other roles in the show.

Young Boy (young M or F). Meets Scrooge at his redemption and is a bit of cheeky chappie. A role suitable for a young male or suitably made up female. Should be perky and be able to deliver lines

Dick (M). Young Ebenezer's friend at Fezziwigs. Male non speaking role

Young Maid (F). Works for Fred. Small female role. Suitable for a young female and fits with any number of other roles in the show.

Butcher (M). Male walk on part suitable for chorus member

PROPS

The list below is what we would call the ideal prop list. However, not all of them are necessary and if you can do it simpler, so much the better!

Act 1

Scene 1 – Full stage / Scrooges office

Two desks and quills, fake candles, paper, pennies, fire or stove, coal / bucket, poles and lamps for carol singers, collecting box, old fashioned horn with big red X

Scene 2 – Bob Cratchit's House

Large bone (fake) x two, soup pan, table and some chairs or bench. Stool for Tiny Tim.

Scene 3 – Scrooge's House

Door with door knocker (*can be a door frame with door painted on some stretchy material in the frame with a split down the centre in order that a face can be poked through the split and then retracted or a door with a flap that opens and closes*).

Winged back armchair, fire effect / fire

Scene 4 – Front Tabs

Personal props only

Scene 5 – Scrooges Bedroom / School / Fezziwigs

Bed Façade with Curtains, Ball, Desk x 2, Chairs, Ledgers, Quills, Tumbleweed

Scene 6 – Front tabs

Personal props only

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Scene 7 – Scrooge’s bedroom / Cratchit’s house / Fred’s house

Bed façade, flashing blue light, big teddy, table, chairs / bench, tumblers / cups / tin cups, chairs and settee or chaise lounge for Fred’s sitting room, card table and chairs – Fred’s sitting room, playing cards, glasses for toast.

ACT 2

Scene 1 – Full stage

Personal props only

Scene 2 – Scrooges bedroom / Rag seller

Bed façade, stools / chairs, bags of rags to decorate the stage.

Scene 3 – Front tabs

Boxes of tissues

Scene 4 – Grave scene

Chair and crutch, Grave stone – EBENEZER SCROOGE with weeds at the base

Scene 5 – Scrooges bedroom

Bed façade, fake turkey.

Scene 6 – Cratchit’s House

Table, chairs / bench, fake turkey, note

Scene 7 – Fred’s drawing room

Personal props only

Scene 8 – Scrooges office

Desks x two, ruler

Scene 9 – Song Sheet – Front Tabs

Sheet with words on – optional

Scene 10 – Finale – full stage

Personal props only

PERSONAL PROPS

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Narrator

Foggy glasses, hanky

Scrooge

Night cap / gown, watch, cane, big colourful hanky, flying goggles, white scarf, old coins.

Bob Cratchit

Pennies, hat, scarf – long

Tiny Tim

Crutch – wooden

Martha

Soup bone – fake

Jacob Marley

Chains

Sid Spectre

Note book / union rules, chains, joke mobile phone

Rapscallion

Plastic fish x two, fake big ears

Ghost of Christmas past

Note, hand gel

Belle

Ring

Ghost of Christmas present.

Sandwich or pie (can be fake), flying goggles, white scarf

Ol' Misery Guts (Ghost of Christmas yet to come).

Skeletal hand and arm, toy mobile phone

Old Joe

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Note book and pencil for writing down his tally, old coins

Mrs Dilber.

Bundle of clothes / bric a brac – the more comedic the better.

Undertaker

Small bundle of jewellery

Mrs Huggins

Bundle of curtains from Scrooge's bed (or same material).

ACT 1

Scene 1

(Opening is a street scene, full stage and an opportunity for opening song. Scrooge comes across the stage scattering everybody in a choreographed piece and exits. The narrator picks up the story as Scrooge's office is set in darkness. The light comes up on Narrator).

Narrator Welcome everyone to foggy old London town. *(Rubs glasses and then sees everything more clearly)*. Oh, actually it's not as foggy as I thought, must have got some pea soup on my spectacles. *(Laughs at self)*. This is London of 1843, famous for its royalty, its fog, and its chirpy inhabitants.

Rapscallion *(Rapscallion appears shouting)*. Morning guv'nor, how's your trouble and strife and your dustbin lids *(to audience)* that'll be wife and kids to you lot.

(Rapscallion ducks down).

Narrator *(Forcing a smile at the over enthusiastic chappie)*. Yes, well at this time London is the centre of the world, it imports sugars and spice and all things nice from across the globe and exports poverty, rickets and malnutrition at the same rate. Now in olden times London used to be a magnet for thieving bankers, corrupt politicians, and quite barmy mayors, hard for you to imagine I know. But our story concerns just one of these men for they were always men, women were not allowed to be corrupt until they got the vote in 1928. But as I was saying we're here to see a certain Mr Ebenezer Scrooge *(light comes up on Scrooge at his desk)*, who lives and works here in the heart of the capital city of England.

Rapscallion *(Appears again and uses some more irreverent cockney rhyming slang)*. Mornin' guv'nor, me ol' treacle, are you mutton jeff.....

Narrator *(Irritated)*. Not now! You've done your bit. If you'd attended the rehearsals you'd know that.

(Rapscallion looks sad and does everything to elicit ahhs from the audience as he slowly retreats behind wherever he came from. He will be a recurring theme throughout).

Narrator Oh don't encourage him. So, back to the story. *(Brief, dismissive and irritated now. The lights come up on Scrooge's office)*. Here is Mr Scrooge sitting in his office counting his money. But wait, who is this arriving? *(Narrator exits)*.

(Bob Cratchit bursts through Scrooge's door all flustered. Scrooge looks up in disdain and stops counting his cash).

Bob Cratchit *(Very apologetic).* Ah Mr Scrooge, I'm sorry I'm late b...

(Scrooge interrupts him).

Scrooge Always excuses I hear Cratchit instead of the scratching of your quill. How would it be if I made excuses like, *(small whiny voice)* I'm sorry Cratchit but I've no money to pay you!

Bob Cratchit Yes, quite right Mr Scrooge, I understand your point. It won't happen again. *(Gets to work).*

Scrooge Good! See that it doesn't. With the holiday coming up it would be a shame if there were not enough to go round for little what's his name, erm, Tiny Tom!

Bob Cratchit It's Tim sir.

Scrooge *(Now losing patience).* Tim, Tom, Tosh. Get on with your work!

Bob Cratchit *(Speaking to the audience).* Work, work, work! That's all he ever says to me. He is completely obsessed with money and making that extra penny wherever he can. Still, I shouldn't grumble. He pays me enough to keep a roof over my head. We've no walls to speak of but you should see the roof. No, I'm only joking. We don't have a roof! That's the trouble we are very poor *(ahhs from the audience, milk it!)* and Scrooge pays me weekly, very weakly. It's coming up to Christmas and I am hoping he will give me the day off. I've not had a day off since, ooh let me see, it must have been when Noah was a lad. That's what it feels like. *(Thinks whilst rubbing his hands together).* I must try getting a bit of warmth back into my hands before I write another number. *(Wraps his hands round the candle on his desk).* I wonder if I could sneak another piece of coal on the fire? *(Goes to stand up).*

Scrooge Talking to yourself won't keep you warm Cratchit. And don't even think about any more coal on the fire. I can read your mind y'know.

Bob Cratchit *(sitting back down at his bench).* Sorry Mr Scrooge. *(To audience).* If he could really read my mind I would now be sacked. Oh well, better get on with it or he'll never let me have any time off.

(Bob starts his work rubbing his hands against the cold. Scrooge starts counting his money again).

Scrooge *(Kissing each coin as he counts them).* One, two, buckle my shoe, three, four, knock at the door. *(There is an actual knock at the door. Scrooge gets*

distracted by the knocking and starts again). One, two, buckle my shoe (*another knock at the door*). Who is that? How rude! Interrupting my blessed counting.

Bob Cratchit Should I get that Mr Scrooge?

(Bob gets up and opens the door. Carol singing starts immediately. The singers are on stage. Scrooge gets up and comes to the door and moving Bob out of the way addresses the singers).

Scrooge When you have quite finished with your strangled caterwauling! (*Indicating the charitable collectors*). What are you collecting for then, children's home, the Welsh whale and walrus watchers society or are you just lining your own pockets, you thieving scoundrels? (*Thinks to himself*). Mmm, not a bad idea actually. Note to self, new business venture.

Charity 1 Hello good sir and a very merry Christmas to you. Are you aware that you could save money by combining your gas and electricity into one single supplier?

Scrooge (*Waves them away.*) Get out of here. (*Goes to close the door but a foot blocks it*).

Charity 2 (*To first collector*). You've got it wrong again haven't you? (*To Scrooge*) Please ignore him sir. We are sorry to disturb you but we are collecting money for a very good cause and wondered if you would care to make a donation?

Scrooge Oh yes and what good cause is that?

Charity 2 Well sir, you would probably expect it to be for the Welsh Whale and Walrus Watchers Society but you would be wrong as it is for (*to audience*) the Scottish Sheep and Shank Shearing Society.

Scrooge Well, that's easy for you to say.

Charity 3 (*To Charity 2*) Move out of the way. Sir, we are collecting for the paupers of the parish and if you enjoyed the choir's singing then we would greatly appreciate your financial support.

Scrooge I'll tell you what; if they sing it again I will give you exactly what your performance deserves. (*Laughs to himself and gets out an old fashioned car horn with a big red X on it*).

(Carol singers begin a three part harmony which is obviously very good).

Scrooge (*Listens for a while appearing to appreciate the efforts being made until they finish when he 'parps' the horn*). What a load of out of tune rubbish. If the paupers are relying on your singing to lift them out of the gutter then I am afraid they

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will be paupers next Christmas and the one after that. *(He slams the door shut and appears to reconsider. He then quickly re-opens the door and shouts after the carollers but they have gone)*. But, I am interested in combining my gas and electricity supplier. Bahh, gone! *(Pauses)*. What is gas and electricity anyway? Bahh, carol singers! This city is full of beggars and rascallions.

Rascallion *(Pops up from behind an object or window frame)*. Hello guv'nor, fancy a Ruby?

Scrooge A what?

Rascallion Ruby Murray, curry!

Scrooge *(Threatening)*. I'll give you curry my little friend!

Rascallion Ta guv! *(Rubbing his hands together)*.

(Scrooge makes to get his stick and Rascallion disappears).

Rascallion Eeek!

Scrooge *(Returns to his counting desk)*. Bahhhhhhhh! I'll get him next time. Now where was I? Oh yes, one, two buckle my shoe, three, four knock at the door. *(There is another knock at the door and Scrooge gets distracted by the knocking)*. Cratchit!

(Bob opens the door and Fred breezes in. He is very genial and rubs his hands as he is cold).

Fred *(He shakes Bob's hand like a long lost friend)*. Bob! How good to see you. Is my uncle here?

Bob Cratchit *(Returning his handshake)*. Fred! What a pleasant surprise. Mr Scrooge is just through there.

(Fred goes to see his uncle and looks into his office. Bob resumes his seat).

Scrooge *(Barely lifting his head)*. Oh it's you. Well come in and don't let the warmth out. *(He warms his hand around a candle to emphasise the point)*. It costs money you know.

Fred *(Turning to Bob and getting a piece of coal out of the scuttle)*. Bob it's freezing in here shall we put another piece of coal on the stove? *(Under the gaze of Scrooge, Fred, deliberately, puts a bit more coal on the fire then walks into Scrooges office)*. That's better. Uncle! Seasons greeting to you. *(He puts out his hand which is ignored by Scrooge)*.

Scrooge Baahh! Greetings, smreetings. You're very generous with other people's means. Are you always so heavy on your feet? These floor boards won't last forever you know with you walking like an elephant. In fact give me a penny for wear and tear.

Fred Oh Uncle you're so funny.

Scrooge I'm not joking. Give me a penny.

Fred Uncle, it is not fair to charge your guests for wear and tear when they come visiting you.

Scrooge Is it not? Well I didn't invite you did I. You turned up unannounced wearing out my door knocker and floor boards, using the coal I've paid for and you think these things should be free do you? Well, how would you like it if I came to your house and did the same?

Fred Uncle, we would like it very much, and that's why I am here, to invite you to be our guest for Christmas.

Scrooge Baahh! Christmas, shistmas. Humbug that's what I say to you. It's all a load of poppycock and money wasting. No, I shall stay at home; I have better things to do.

Fred Things to do on Christmas day uncle?

Scrooge Yes

Fred Like what?

Scrooge Counting.

Fred Counting what?

(This now needs to be done rapid fire as per the ABBA song, Money Money, Money).

Scrooge Money!

Fred Money?

Scrooge Money!

Fred Always? *(Laughs).*

Scrooge Sonny? *(Questioning Fred's response)*

Rapscallion *(Pops his head up from behind some furniture or in a window again to finish the song).* In a rich man's world.

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(Fred and Scrooge stare at the Rascalion and Bob gently pushes him back where he came from)

Fred Uncle, the invitation remains open to you. Clara and I would love to see you.

Scrooge You can close the invitation, I won't be coming. *(Scrooge gets up and starts to usher Fred to the door).*

Fred *(Being pushed out).* Well, if you change your mind.

Scrooge *(Fred is still being ushered out by Scrooge).* I won't!

Fred *(As he leaves).* Bob, I hope you and your family stay well and uncle has remembered Christmas is supposed to be a holiday. *(Bob raises his eyebrows and shoulders behind Scrooges back).*

Scrooge *(As at last Fred is leaving it's as if Scrooge has changed his mind)* Oh, Fred!

Fred *(sounding hopeful)* Yes uncle?

Scrooge *(Scrooge holds out his hand) Penny! (Fred takes out a coin and places a penny in his mitt. Scrooge shoves him out and closes the door kissing the penny as he does so. He shuffles back to his counting desk and as he passes Bob he has his hand out).* I'll also have the same from you Cratchit. Coal doesn't grow on trees! *(Bob reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a purse and delves deep to find his penny. He turns his purse upside down for effect and shakes it).*

Bob But I don't have a penny Mr Scrooge.

Scrooge *(Scrooge gives Bob a penny).* Well Cratchit, here's today's pay for you and don't spend it all at once.

(Bob takes the penny and puts it into his pocket. Scrooge holds out his hand waiting but says nothing. Bob reluctantly takes it back out and hands it back to pay for the coal).

Scrooge I told you not to spend it all at once didn't I? You'll never make anything of yourself Cratchit with your frivolous ways. *(Laughs to himself).*

(Opportunity for a song here).

(End of song, blackout).

(End of scene).

Scene 2

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(Bob Cratchit's house. The scene is set in the blackout. This can be a separate cloth or just set in front of tabs. It is a sparsely furnished kitchen / dining room with just a table and some chairs. The lighting is meagre. All the children are there around the table doing school work. Mrs Cratchit is working at the stove boiling some bones / veg for tea. Bob enters, he is late getting in).

Mrs Cratchit You're late home Bob. That Mr Scrooge he is so mean he works you to the bone! Which reminds me, it's your favourite tea. *(She pulls a bone out of the soup pan on the table).* I managed to get a soup bone from the butchers which should do us a couple of nights if we fill it out with some barley.

Bob Cratchit *(Being quite cheery and upbeat).* Ahhh soup. My favourite! What do you say Peter?

Peter I agree with mother. I think Mr Scrooge is a mean old man!

Tiny Tim Peter, we can't say that after all it's Mr Scrooge who keeps a roof over our head.

Bob Cratchit Tom's right!

Tiny Tim It's Tim, Daddy.

Bob Cratchit *(Almost dismissing Tiny Tim).* Yes, yes, Mr Scrooge may be a little grumpy sometimes but somewhere in there is a good heart!

Rapscallion *(He pops his head round onto the stage either through a door or window, or just his head round a flat).* You're 'avin a giraffe mate.

(The whole family stop and stare at Rapscallion disapprovingly and he drops his head and melts away. The door opens and in comes Martha. The Cratchits' eldest daughter).

All *(Reanimated).* Martha!

Mrs Cratchit We weren't expecting you until much later. I know you're very busy in the shop at this time of the year.

Martha It's been a wonderful day Mother, Father. All day long people have been coming in buying their Christmas hats and bonnets for church on Christmas day. And I have a surprise for you!

(Everybody stops what they are doing and now look at Martha. They don't have too many surprises in this house).

All *(Hardly containing themselves).* Oh Martha what is it?

Martha *(Taking it from under her coat)* It's a soup bone!

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All *(Slight pause as if they were expecting something else)* Hurrah! A soup bone!
(Moderately excited Mrs Cratchit and Bob hug their daughter).

Mrs Cratchit This will be marvellous!

Tiny Tim Father, Christmas day is going to be so wonderful. I do hope Mr Scrooge allows you the time off so that we can all celebrate it as a family.

Bob Cratchit I am sure he will Ted. *(Tiny Tim rolls his eyes)*. Though I will probably have to make it up somehow over the coming weeks. But Christmas is always a great day in the Cratchit's house!

(Song opportunity for some or all of the Cratchits where they may sing about the joys of Christmas).

(End song, blackout)

(End scene).

Scene 3

(Front of tabs. This is the front of Scrooge's house. The stage is very dark and the only thing lit is the door. As the scene opens Scrooge is approaching the door. The ghost of Jacob Marley is seen as a door knocker or as a face peering at him. Scrooge reaches to open the door as Jacob wails at him).

Jacob Marley OoooOOOOoooooh

Scrooge *(He returns the 'spook' not scared)*. OoooOOOOoooooh to you to! *(Jacob Marley is still there. Scrooge then coughs)*. Cough!

Jacob Marley *(The ghost is then frightened off)*. Aaaagh!!

Scrooge *(To audience)*. That's the last time I eat at Pickled Pete's Herring Shop! His fish must be off. I will speak with him in the morning.

(Scrooge exits and the tabs open to reveal Scrooge's living space. It is almost full stage and should be quite grey. On stage should be an old fashioned wing back chair and a small side table. To one side should be his bed or facsimile. There can be other meagre furnishings and a mock fire. The lighting changes as Scrooge enters his living room. He changes into a night cap and dressing gown. Mrs Huggins enters in apron and mop cap).

Mrs Huggins Mr Scrooge! I didn't hear you come in sir. Would you care for your supper now sir? *(She bobs)*.

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Scrooge Yes I would. But mind there is no fish! I've had one funny turn tonight and I don't wish for another.

Mrs Huggins Why sir, whatever can you mean?

Scrooge Oh never mind. Be off woman! *(She goes to bob as a curtsey and exit but comically stops as Scrooge speaks again)*. And bring me a glass of warm mead with my food. *(Mrs Huggins bobs again and goes off to fetch his supper)*. That should shift the foul humours that plague me so. *(He rubs his hands in front of the fire, real or imaginary and settles himself in his chair)*.

Sid Spectre *(His head just peeping on stage and speaking to someone off stage in a stage whisper)*. I can't see him he must have gone. *(Walks onto the stage. The chair masks Scrooge from their sight)*.

(All the following lines still in stage whispers)

Jacob Marley *(Peers onto stage)*. Look again, he must be there somewhere?

Sid Spectre No, he's gone I tell you. You missed your chance.

Jacob Marley *(Coming more onto stage and feeling braver but still acting timid)*. He fair gave me a fright y' know.

Sid Spectre How is that possible? You're the ghost not him!

Jacob Marley It's just when we were alive he was so horrible and mean and the things he got me doing. *(To the audience)*. Stealing lollies off babies *(elicit audience booing)*, pinching pies off window sills *(again boo)* and worst still swindling mothers out of their pennies *(big boooooo)*. Oh he was terrible!

Sid Spectre That's as maybe but you have to speak to him and warn him or do you want to wear your chain for the rest of eternity?

(Sid and Jacob rattle their chains quietly and both emit scary but almost stage whisper OooooOOOooos).

Jacob Marley Do we have to do that every time we rattle them?

Sid Spectre Apparently we do. Union rules!

Jacob Marley Oh well, here goes.

Jacob Marley / Sid Spectre *(Sid and Jacob rattle their chains again, this time louder and Scrooge stirs and speaks from his chair)*. OoooooooOOOOOOoooo

Scrooge *(Speaking out to the ether)*. Who's there?

Jacob Marley *(Scared)*. Aaaah! *(Jumps into the arms of Sid)*.

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Scrooge (*Not quite sure*). It's that fish again. I must be herring things! (*A little look to the audience*).

Sid Spectre (*To Jacob*). Get down! (*Puts him down*). He can't see us yet unless we want him to.

Scrooge (*Again from his chair to the 'unseen'*). If you are thieves and vagabonds you will not find anything to steal here! (*He stays in his chair with his back to the ghosts*).

Jacob Marley (*Still a little nervous he coughs to clear his throat and speaks in a spooky voice*). Sir, there is only one thief and vagabond in this room.

Scrooge (*He gets up and looks round the room*) And pray tell who is that? I can see only one person here and that is me.

Jacob Marley Exactly!

Sid Spectre Now!

Jacob Marley / Sid Spectre (*Sid and Jacob rattle their chains loudly and with much gusto. Scrooge can now see them*). ooooOOOOOOooooooo!

Scrooge (*Scrooge drops to his knees in fright*). Spirits, why do you haunt me so?

Jacob Marley (*With a dramatic but spooky voice*). Ebenezer Scrooge! (*To Sid in a stage whisper*). How am I doing?

Sid Spectre (*In another stage whisper*). Fine! Just as we rehearsed it remember.

Jacob Marley OK. (*Starts again but coughs to clear his voice*). Ebenezer Scrooge!

Sid Spectre You've said that! Get on with it!

Jacob Marley Sorry. (*In a very spooky voice to Scrooge*). In my life you knew me as your business partner Jacob Marley.

Scrooge So, who are you now?

Jacob Marley (*Normal voice here*). Why, still Jacob Marley of course.

Scrooge Oh good, I just wanted to clear that up. Carry on!

Jacob Marley (*Being quite gentlemanly about it and in a normal voice*). Oh thank you, that's jolly decent of you. Now, where was I? (*Running quickly through his last line*). Oh yes, "in my life you knew me as Jacob Marley ..." (*Thinking*). Right here

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