

A COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CAROL

Book & music by RON KAEHLER & ALBERT EVANS;
Lyrics by ALBERT EVANS & RON KAEHLER
Commissioned & originally directed by JAMES ROCCO

MUSICAL NUMBERS, ACT ONE

1. "Marley County Christmas" Dwight and Company
2. "Count to Ten, Bobbie Jo" Bobbie Jo
3. "Time Crawls" Piano
4. "I Gave Myself a Bottle for Christmas" Dwight
5. "Bobbie Jo" Reprise Bobbie Jo
6. Band Flourishes Piano
7. "Housetop Boogie" Lavinia, Jane, & Tim
8. Talent Show Underscore Piano
9. "Jingle-Ayo" Linda Lee
10. "Jingle-Ayo" Underscore..... Piano
11. "We Three Kings" Virgil, Radio Man, Charley
12. "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" Chorus
13. Radio Music Piano
14. Marley's Manifestation Piano
15. Christmas Past Piano
16. Boyhood Woman's Voice, Children
17. "Angel Beside Me" Fanny & Boy Eb
18. "Angel" Reprise Young Eb
19. Party Music Piano
20. "Silent Night" Piano
21. Fanny's Death Piano
22. "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" Carolers
23. "A Golden Idol" Belle
24. Christmas Present Piano, Lavinia, Jane, Tim, Linda Lee

MUSICAL NUMBERS, ACT 2

25. "Less is More" Jane & Tim
26. "Life Goes to Show Ya" Bobbie Jo & Lavinia
27. Carols Piano
28. "The Christmas Train" Dwight & Ensemble
29. Incidentals Piano
30. "God Bless Us Every One" Bobbie Jo & Ensemble
31. Christmas Yet to Come..... Piano
32. "Goodbye, Old Dog" Lavinia & Ensemble
33. "Angel Beside Me" Reprise..... Bobbie Jo
34. Finale Scrooge & Company
35. Bows Piano
36. Exit Music Piano

ACT ONE

NARRATOR: The year is 1954. This is the TOWN SQUARE of Marley County. That's the MARLEY SAVINGS & LOAN, and the MARLEY HOTEL in front of you. That banner across the hotel reads, 'MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS FARM-A-THON.'

MUSIC NO. 1: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS

DWIGHT: "O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, HOW STILL WE SEE THEE LIE; ABOVE THY DEEP AND DREAMLESS SLEEP, THE SILENT STARS GO BY."

[CHARLEY enters; he's pleasant, gregarious, portly, familiar, Santa-ish]

CHARLEY: Y' know, Christmas began in a humble place. In a little country town not really all that different from any small town you find all across America. Where most folks don't have a whole lot, and everyone's trying hard to make a living, pay their rent, feed their families, and raise their kids right. Lord knows it ain't easy. Often times we can lose hope. We can lose faith. We can lose heart. But then every year Christmas comes along to remind us that God dwells within each and every one of us. And joy —no matter how long lost, no matter how long gone— can be ours to share again. All we have to do is open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, and miracles can occur. That's right. Miracles. Now you may think "miracle" is too strong a word. But that's exactly what happened, right here in Marley County. Not too long ago. And just about this time of year.

DWIGHT: AUTUMN WAS A LITTLE TOO COLD, AND IT'LL GET WORSE SO WE'VE BEEN TOLD BY THE ALMANAC THAT'S NEVER WRONG EXCEPT WHEN IT'S NOT RIGHT.

BUT STILL SOMEHOW YOU FEEL A GLOW, THAT CUTS RIGHT THROUGH THE ICE AND SNOW AND YOU CAN HEAR A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE SILENT NIGHT.

MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — COUNTIN' PENNIES AT THE FIVE AND DIME.

MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — DADDY'S WORKIN' DOUBLE OVERTIME.

MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — RUDOLPH CAN'T AFFORD TO LIGHT HIS NOSE.

C'mon, now!

DWIGHT & CHARLEY: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS!

DWIGHT: SANTA'S GOT TOO SKINNY FOR HIS CLOTHES!

CHARLEY: Dwight, that is one catchy tune! And the words are pure poetry.

DWIGHT: Yep. This little opus of mine just might win me that talent show tonight.

[VIRGIL enters from HOTEL with ladder & string of lights]

VIRGIL: Hey, fellas!

DWIGHT and CHARLEY: Mornin', Virgil.

DWIGHT: Imagine. Singin' on the radio! Just like the Grand Ole Opry!

CHARLEY: Next stop on the Christmas Train: Nashville!

DWIGHT: Hey, why not? Woo-Woo! All aboard!

VIRGIL: Excuse me, Mr. Chet Atkins. You forget that me, Charley, and Bert are in the contest, too! We're doing the Three Kings song.

CHARLEY: Except we're down one king, Virgil. Bert's gone and lost his voice.

VIRGIL: He did? Nuts!

DWIGHT: Maybe you can call it "We Two Kings."

VIRGIL: *(tangled in the lights)* Yuck. Yuck. I'd laugh but my mouth is freezin' shut out here! Come on, Dwight, hold this ladder steady, so's I can finish my decoratin'.

DWIGHT: Just what are you decoratin', Virg? The hotel or you?

ALL: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS —

CHARLEY: *(to audience.)* EVEN THOUGH THE CHANCE OF SNOW IS SLIGHT,

ALL: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS —

CHARLEY: FOLKS ROUND HERE STILL MAKE THE SEASON BRIGHT.

*[SCROOGE appears in window on second story of HOTEL.
Opens window, sees Virgil securing lights]*

SCROOGE: What a waste of good electricity! *[slams window shut, disappears inside]*

CHARLEY: Well, most folks, that is.

NOW YOU MAY THINK THAT YOU HEARD THIS STORY BEFORE,
WELL, OF COURSE YOU DID, WE ADMIT IT, YOU DID,
EV'RY WORTHWHILE STORY'S GONNA KEEP HAPPENIN' ALL THE TIME.
AND YOU MAY THINK THAT IT HAPPENED
A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO IN A TOWN CALLED LONDON
WHERE THE ONLY SONG THEY KNEW WENT:

ALL: "GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN" . . .

CHARLEY: WELL, MAYBE THAT'S RIGHT AND MAYBE IT'S NOT,
BUT THIS TIME, FOLKS, WE'VE SET THE PLOT IN THE TIME THAT OCCUPIED THE SLOT
BETWEEN WORLD WAR TWO AND CAMELOT WHEN SOME FOLKS HAD BUT MOST HAD NOT
AND POOR FOLKS LIVED ON DIDDLY SQUAT AND MARLEY COUNTY WAS A SPOT
YOU'D SOMETIMES THINK THE LORD FORGOT, WHERE LIFE WAS HARD AND DREAMS WERE SHOT
BUT THEY HAD CHRISTMAS — NO MATTER WHAT!

[RADIO MAN WKRG enters, greeted by CHARLEY, DWIGHT, VIRGIL]

ALL: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — NO ONE IS TOO POOR TO SING A SONG.
MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — DON'T COST NOTHIN' JUST TO SING ALONG!

NARRATOR: Let's go into the MARLEY HOTEL lobby. LAVINIA is stringing lights around Jacob Marley's portrait. DORIS PEACH is conducting her KIDDY CHOIR. And LINDA LEE, the waitress from the luncheonette, is helping prepare for tonight's big doings.

LAVINIA, LINDA, DORIS, KIDDY CHOIR (TIM and JANE):
MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS! PRACTICIN' A CHRISTMAS CONCERT SONG!

DORIS: "ON THE THIRD DAY OF CHRISTMAS MY TRUE LOVE GAVE TO ME —"?

KIDDY CHOIR (TIM and JANE): THREE FRENCH FRIES!

DORIS: No!

KIDDY CHOIR (TIM and JANE): TWO DIRTY GLOVES!

DORIS: No!

BOY (TIM): AND A PARK BENCH IN A PEAR TREE!

DORIS: I know you know the right words. You're just doing this to torment me.

LAVINIA: Don't fret, Doris. They'll be perfect angels for the show tonight.

GIRL (JANE): (*screaming as BOY annoys her*) Ow!! Knock it off!!

LAVINIA: And Marlon Brando will be slidin' down my chimney for some Christmas cheer. Anything's possible.

ALL: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS!

BOY (TIM): WHY THE HECK'S THAT SONG SO GOL-DURN LONG?

(*DWIGHT, VIRGIL, CHARLEY, and RADIO MAN WKRG enter.*)

LAVINIA: Hey, close that door! You're lettin' the heat out!

CHARLEY: Hot coffee, Lavinia!

LAVINIA: Help yourselves, boys.

DWIGHT: Make mine a double! I've had me quite a night!

LAVINIA: Oh, no doubt. But answer me this, Dwight. Did any of last night's dubious activities include your job sweeping up at the bank?

DWIGHT: Well ...

LAVINIA: I thought not. Make that coffee to go. Your Uncle Eb's gonna be comin' down those stairs any minute and you don't want to — (*she notices RADIO MAN and his gear*)
Wait a min! Are you the emcee for the fundraiser??

RADIO MAN: Yes'm.

LAVINIA: The Radio Man is here!! (*ALL react.*) Welcome, Mr. WKRK! Make yourself to home! Oh, I can't tell you how long it's been since my golden tones graced the airwaves!

RADIO MAN: You've sung on the radio before?

LAVINIA: Darlin'. During all my years on the bluegrass circuit, I must've sung on the radio a million times.

SCROOGE'S VOICE: Gosh darn it!

LAVINIA: Oh, Lord! Dwight. You know your Uncle at Christmas. Don't fan the flames. Go. Now.

DWIGHT: Later, alligators! (*exits out door to The SQUARE.*)

LAVINIA: Virgil, show Mr. WKRK where to set up in the dining room.

VIRGIL: Sure, Lavinia.

RADIO MAN: Lavinia? I remember you! You were that hot pistol of a singer with Jasper Jillis and the Jugboys!

LAVINIA: Watch it, darlin'. There are children present.

RADIO MAN: I had a real crush on you, lady! I heard you and Jasper finally got hitched.

LAVINIA: Oh, we did indeed. Settled right here. Opened this hotel.

RADIO MAN: Jasper Jillis owns this place?

LAVINIA: No, darlin'. The bank owns this place. And Mr. Jillis has been away on a farewell concert tour for about fifteen years now.

RADIO MAN: Oh! I'm sorry.

LAVINIA: (*Flirting.*) Oh, I'm not.

RADIO MAN: Well! In that case, just show me where ya want me to plug in.

LAVINIA: It's a little early for that sort of thing, m'dear. B ut I'm all for getting in the festive mood!

LAVINIA & RADIO MAN: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS; GONNA HAVE A HULLABALOO TONIGHT!

CHARLEY: (to Radio Man.) Hey, you sing good! Do you know "We Three Kings"?

RADIO MAN: 'Course I do.

VIRGIL: You want to be in a show?

DORIS: All right, you kids. Let's try it again! And this time, don't be evil.

[ALL simultaneously burst into song in a display of spirited cacophony]

LAVINIA, DORIS, LINDA LEE: MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS; COUNTIN' PENNIES AT THE 5 AND DIME. MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — DADDY'S WORKIN' DOUBLE OVERTIME —

KIDDY CHOIR: ON THE 4TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY TRUE LOVE GAVE TO ME —
4 STALLING FORDS, 3 FRENCH FRIES, 2 DIRTY GLOVES, AND A PARK BENCH IN A PEAR TREE —

VIRGIL, CHARLEY, RADIO MAN: 'WE 3 KINGS OF ORIENT ARE, BEARING GIFTS WE TRAVERSE AFAR'

[SCROOGE appears at top of stairs]

SCROOGE: Will you all shut up! *(ALL fall silent)* Humbug!

LAVINIA: Mornin', Mr. Scrooge. Getting to the bank a little late today?

SCROOGE: I barely slept, thanks to that dinner you made.

LAVINIA: My Mistletoe Meatloaf didn't agree with you? I am amazed and speechless.

SCROOGE : If you're speechless, how about shutting up? The whole lot of you. Screaming like banshees. Don't any of you people work?

VIRGIL: But the Radio Man is here.

CHARLEY: For the Farm-a-Thon?

SCROOGE: "The Farm-a-thon." Begging over the air waves. It's unseemly! I can't believe you people got the Town Council to fund such a degrading spectacle.

DORIS: Well, Mr. Scrooge, what can you do? The bank don't run city hall.

LAVINIA: Not yet.

SCROOGE: It's unseemly! This whole holiday is. Instead of pulling themselves up by their boot straps, people are counting on Santa Claus to bail 'em out! And all over town? Nobody's working. They're just whoopin' it up at parties!

LAVINIA: Oh, I know. The way folks are celebrating, you'd think it was somebody's birthday.

SCROOGE: Oh, humbug. Just give me my newspaper! [LAVINIA hands him a paper]

VIRGIL: Just what kind of an insect is a humbug?

SCROOGE: Get out of my way, you moron! *(Stomps to the door)* And if that hootenanny of yours runs past the allotted time, you'll have me to deal with in the morning!

DORIS: A Merry Christmas to you, too.

SCROOGE: *[turns and glares at her]* "Merry Christmas" indeed.

IF I HAVE TO HEAR THOSE TWO STUPID WORDS AGAIN, I WILL GO INSANE.

IT'S A ROYAL PAIN IN THE BUTT TO PUT UP WITH ALL THIS GROUNDLESS GLEE.

AND WHO THE HECK SAID WE HAVE TO HEAR THOSE SAPPY SONGS YEAR AFTER YEAR?

THE WAY THEY FOUL THE ATMOSPHERE, IT'S —

LINDA LEE: *[entering from dining room]* "GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLE —"

SCROOGE: SHUT UP!!!

LINDA LEE: “— MEN.”

SCROOGE: *(to DORIS.)* YOU KNOW WHAT CHRISTMAS IS, MY DEAR?
IT’S THE MOST DISHONEST TIME OF YEAR.
IT’S THE USELESS PRESENT YOU AWAIT. IT’S THE CARD YOU SEND TO FOLKS YOU HATE.
IT’S ANOTHER CHANCE TO GET IN DEBT. IT’S A DAY THAT’S DARK AND COLD AND WET.
IF I HAD MY WAY, ANY FOOL I MET WHO PRAISED THE DAY WOULD SURELY GET
IMPALED ON A HOLLY BAYONET, AND WHIPPED INTO EGGNOG — AT THE LUNCHEONETTE!
WHAT A WASTE OF UNPRODUCTIVE LIVES! SEND IT BACK TO CURRIER AND IVES!

NARRATOR: Scrooge stormed out of the Lobby, and into the Town Square.

SCROOGE: It’s all humbug. Hypocritical humbug.

[CHARLEY emerges from HOTEL and watches Scrooge exit into BANK]

CHARLEY: Well, now. There’s a man who could use some cheerin’ up. Don’t worry,
though. Things will brighten up momentarily.

NARRATOR: Virgil lit the Christmas lights.

CHARLEY: See what I mean? Now, I think it’s high time we got to that miracle I was talkin’ about,
don’t you?

MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — WHY IT HAPPENED I CAN’T RIGHTLY SAY.

MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS — HOW IT HAPPENED — WELL, THAT THERE’S OUR PLAY. *[exits]*

SCENE 2: MARLEY SAVINGS & LOAN

NARRATOR: Let’s go into the Marley Savings & Loan. There’s Scrooge’s office, and there’s Bobbie
Jo’s desk.

CAROLERS: “GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN, LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY. . .”

SCROOGE’S VOICE: You people get out of here! Y’hear me?! Cratchit!

BOBBIE JO: Mornin’ Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Cratchit, did you give those people permission to sing in the lobby?

BOBBIE JO: Why, yessir. They’re the carolers from church. I —

SCROOGE: This is a place of business, not a choir loft!

BOBBIE JO: But I thought it would be a nice touch on Christmas Eve and all.
And they’re collecting for —

SCROOGE: There is no soliciting allowed on these premises. You know that.

BOBBIE JO: Sir, they’re not soliciting. They’re helpin’ folks out.

SCROOGE: A handout does nothing for a man's dignity, Cratchit.

BOBBIE JO: Well, neither does destitution.

SCROOGE: Excuse me?

BOBBIE JO: Mr. Scrooge, I'm sorry, but I see those farmers march in and out of here every day and--

SCROOGE: Deadbeats, every last one of 'em.

BOBBIE JO: But they can't feed their families anymore! Why last week, Sam Caleb was even caught stealing. Just to put bread on the table.

SCROOGE: Last I heard, thieves are given jail sentences, not charity. Now, unless the prison's burned down, that's where they all belong.

BOBBIE JO: I am sure most would rather die than steal, sir!

SCROOGE: Then let 'em die. They'd finally be contributing to the common good.

BOBBIE JO: *(losing temper)* Well, don't that just beat all! I have never heard such hateful — *(she catches herself)*

MUSIC NO. 2: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO

SCROOGE: What?

BOBBIE JO: Nothin'.

SCROOGE: Honest men earn an honest dollar, Cratchit. Do you think anyone ever gave me a penny I didn't work for? You show me a man who is not self-sufficient, who depends on the "charity" of anyone for anything at all, and I'll show you one sorry soul. Now get that circus act off the premises.

BOBBIE JO: Yes, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Do your job, woman. That's all I ask.

BOBBIE JO: Yes, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Unless you have a problem with that?

BOBBIE JO: No, Mr. Scrooge. *[SCROOGE exits]*

NARRATOR: The phone on BOBBIE JO's desk rings. JANE, at the Hotel Lobby Front Desk, is calling. TIM is at JANE's side— and so is Lavinia, who's working on her costume.

BOBBIE JO: Marley Savings and Loan.

JANE: Hey, Mom!

BOBBIE JO: Jane, I can't talk now. He is on the warpath. (*very concerned*) Is something wrong with Tim? He didn't fall?!

JANE: Mama. Tim's fine. I'm fine. Everything's just fine. We're at the hotel, safe and sound, just about to practice our song with Lavinia.

BOBBIE JO: All right then. Y'all have fun. I'll see you later. Don't irritate Vinny too much and stay close to your brother. 'Bye, Jane.

JANE: Wait! Tim wants to know if you finished his costume.

BOBBIE JO: Just a few more snowflakes to sew and —

SCROOGE: Cratchit!!

BOBBIE JO: Gotta go! [*Jane, Tim, Lavinia exit*]

SCROOGE: [entering] Was that a personal call?

BOBBIE JO: No.

SCROOGE: Here's the "D" to "K" files. I want 'em done before one o'clock.

BOBBIE JO: But even if I skip lunch, I'm only gonna get through "D" by one.

SCROOGE: Then you better get cracking. "L-M-N-O-P" coming up. Oh by the way: Why not just donate your lunch? To charity!

BOBBIE JO: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO. JUST THINK OF ALL THE BILLS YOU OWE. SO BITE YOUR TONGUE AND TAKE IT SLOW AND COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO — JUST COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO.

The thing is, sir? I was hoping I could leave early today.

SCROOGE: The allotted day is tomorrow.

BOBBIE JO: But my kids are in that show, Mr. Scrooge. There's a lot of errands I —

SCROOGE: Please, Cratchit. I know all about it.

BOBBIE JO: You do?

SCROOGE: Oh, yeah. And just to make sure you don't discuss it on office time, I'm disconnecting your phone!

BOBBIE JO: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO! THOUGH YOU'RE UPSET, DON'T LET IT SHOW. YOU GAVE YOUR PRIDE UP LONG AGO. SO COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO — JUST COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO.

SCROOGE: And Cratchit? Don't even think of sewing that costume. Just get to work! [*exits*]

BOBBIE JO:

ONE FINE DAY I'LL MAKE A BREAK. IT'S TOO MUCH BULL FOR A GIRL TO TAKE.
BUT THERE'S THREE OF US TO CLOTHE AND FEED, AND FORTUNE'S JUST A WORD YOU READ.
IF I'VE BEEN BAD I GUESS I'VE PAID. MY SICK SON NEEDS THE DOCTOR'S AID.
DOES HEAVEN SEE MY LIFE OF WOE? I ATE HUMBLE PIE AND DINED ON CROW.
FOR NINE LONG YEARS I'VE HEARD SCROOGE YAP, BUT THE TENSION'S GROWIN'
AND I'M GONNA SNAP!

SCROOGE [*entering*]: Cratchit! Letter!

BOBBIE JO: Yes, sir.

SCROOGE: To Mabel Suggs, 35 Maiden Lane, blah, blah. Dear Widow Suggs:
Due to your failure to pay your bills, we are ordering the shutdown of your gas, 'lectric,
and water, effective twelve noon today. Very truly yours, cetera, cetera. Fill in the rest ...

BOBBIE JO: Mr. Scrooge! How can you? On Christmas Eve!

SCROOGE: You're right, Cratchit. What am I thinking? (*Dictates:*) "P.S.: Merry Christmas!" (*exits*)

BOBBIE JO: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO! FORGOT THE FIT YOU WANT TO THROW!
DON'T COUNT THE HOURS LEFT TO GO. JUST COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO.
JUST COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO.

BACK-UP SINGERS: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO! COUNT TO TEN.
OH, COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO. BOBBIE JO. COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO.

SCROOGE'S VOICE: CRATCHIT!!

BOBBIE JO: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO! JUST THINK OF ALL THE BILLS YOU OWE.
SO BITE YOUR TONGUE AND TAKE IT SLOW. AND COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO —
JUST COUNT TO TEN, THEN COUNT TO TEN AGAIN. COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO!

BACK-UP SINGERS: COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO! ONCE AGAIN, COUNT TO TEN.
OH. COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO, BOBBIE JO. COUNT TO TEN, COUNT TO TEN AGAIN.
COUNT TO TEN! COUNT TO TEN, BOBBIE JO!

MUSIC NO. 3: TIME CRAWLS

NARRATOR: BOBBIE JO works on the files, and the day passes. Now it's 7:30 PM.

SCROOGE: We're in the home stretch, Cratchit! Hold the fort while I'm down in the vault. (*exits*)
And turn that radio off!!!

MUSIC NO. 4: I GAVE MYSELF A BOTTLE FOR CHRISTMAS

DWIGHT: I GAVE MYSELF A BOTTLE FOR CHRISTMAS. I GOTTA SAY, I TOOK ME BY SURPRISE!
SINCE THIS MORNING WHEN I BOUGHT IT, I GUESS I PLUMB FORGOT IT,
'CAUSE I NEVER SAID A WORD TO PUT ME WISE.

BOBBIE JO: Dwight? [*BOBBIE JO opens office door; DWIGHT enters, effervescent*]

DWIGHT: HOW DID I KNOW THAT IT WAS WHAT I WISHED FOR?
SANTA HAD A FEW AND TALKED, I DO BELIEVE.
IT IS JUST MY SIZE AND COLOR, BUT I WISH THAT IT WAS FULLER,
'CAUSE IT'S GOTTA LAST TILL NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Second verse!

I GAVE MYSELF A BOTTLE FOR CHRISTMAS. AND I HAD A PREVIEW CUP OF CHRISTMAS CHEER.
TRUTH TO TELL, I AIN'T BEEN SOBER SINCE EARLY IN OCTOBER,
AND I DO NOT MEAN OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR!

BOBBIE JO: Oh, nurse!

DWIGHT: I HEAR SLEIGHBELLS WHEN SUMMER'S IN THE MEADOW.
EV'RY HALLOWEEN MY CHRISTMAS SPIRITS SOAR. KEEP YOUR MISTLETOE AND HOLLY,
ONLY ONE THING MAKES ME JOLLY. IT'S THE STOCKIN' STUFFER YOU CAN POUR.

Words and music by Dwight Scrooge!

BOBBIE JO: Charming.

DWIGHT: I'm thinkin' of singin' it tonight. But then again —

BOBBIE JO: Lord! What time is it?!

DWIGHT: Just a little before show time.

BOBBIE JO: Oh, my kids must be worried sick!

DWIGHT: Wrong.

NARRATOR: TIM and JANE are bundled up against the cold. Beneath her coat, JANE has an angel costume. TIM's not in his costume yet. He wears a leg brace and walks with difficulty.

BOBBIE JO: Kids, I'm sorry! I lost all track of time.

DWIGHT: Lavinia couldn't get through on the phone, so I knew you needed rescuin'.

BOBBIE JO: My hero.

JANE: Mom, does my halo look right? I want it to look like the angels in my art books.

BOBBIE JO: It's lovely, sweetheart. I'm sure Daddy's looking down from Heaven right now, marveling at how perfectly you've captured the real thing. Which reminds me —here's your costume, Tim; you better ask Vinny to finish it.

TIM: Mom, is it gonna snow yet or what?

BOBBIE JO: I couldn't tell you, honey. I've been sitting in here all day.

JANE: Tim keeps askin' everyone if it's gonna snow. He's got what my doctor books call an obsession.

DWIGHT: A what? Jane, the words you come up with!

BOBBIE JO: You can't imagine the words this little Einstein uses. On the other hand — (*hugging TIM*) —this little devil! The words he uses are far more common.

TIM: Mom. I only cussed once today.

SCROOGE [*entering*]: What is going on —? Dwight? What are you doing in my office?

DWIGHT: Uncle Eb, what are you doin' holdin' this woman captive on Christmas Eve?

SCROOGE: Didn't I warn you about drinking on these prem — What are those?!

BOBBIE JO: Those are my children, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: Remove them at once. And Dwight, if you're sober enough to push a broom, get back to work.

DWIGHT: Oh, no more workin' tonight, Unk! Come on. Close up shop and let's go to the doins'!

SCROOGE: Get your hands off me!

DWIGHT: Listen, someone's gonna win actual money! I know you'll like that!

SCROOGE: Will you leave me alone?

DWIGHT: No. I won't leave you alone! For once in your life, I want ya to have some fun!

SCROOGE: Fun. That's all you're ever gonna know, isn't it, boy?

DWIGHT: I certainly hope so!

SCROOGE: Well, I don't need to have "fun" with a worthless drunk who's all too willing to make a complete fool of himself in public.

DWIGHT: Hey . . .

SCROOGE: It's not bad enough the whole town knows what a nothing you are, now you gotta broadcast it to the entire state.

DWIGHT: Gee, Uncle Eb. A simple "no" woulda sufficed.

SCROOGE: Now clear out of here. And take those children with you.

BOBBIE JO: Go on y'all. I'll see you in a little bit.

DWIGHT: You know, Uncle Eb. I'm not askin' you for nothin' but to be my friend.

SCROOGE: Just leave.

DWIGHT: And I ain't gonna give up. No sir. You can carry on all you want, but every year, come hell or high water, I'm gonna be here, up close and personal, wishin' you a very, merry Christmas!!

SCROOGE: Get out!

DWIGHT: And a happy new year!

SCROOGE: OUT! (*DWIGHT, JANE, TIM exit*) All right then. Let's finish these files.

BOBBIE JO: You really are somethin', old man.

SCROOGE: I beg your pardon?

BOBBIE JO: Why are you so cruel to him? He's a good man.

SCROOGE: He's an idiot.

BOBBIE JO: He's your family! But you'd never know it by the way you treat him.

SCROOGE: I'll thank you to not speak of my family, Cratchit.

BOBBIE JO: Your only livin' kin! You'd think that might be precious to you.

SCROOGE: Keep to your own affairs, woman. And leave me to mine.

BOBBIE JO: It's amazin'. Not even Christmas can thaw out that iceberg you call a heart!

SCROOGE: This Christmas y'all just love means nothing to me. A lot of good it seems to be doing you.

BOBBIE JO: Oh, it does me just fine. 'Cause it's the one time of the year I can almost forget my troubles. But every time I start gettin' reacquainted with my better qualities, I have to hear your whiny old voice. And I have to look upon your mean old face. And it's all I can do to just not up and quit!

SCROOGE: Well, maybe you just have.

BOBBIE JO: What?

SCROOGE: I ain't stopping you. Go on.

BOBBIE JO: Well. All right. Fine.

SCROOGE: Don't forget to take your belongings. And only your belongings?

MUSIC NO. 5: BOBBIE JO - REPRISE

NARRATOR: Bobbie Jo grabs her coat and marches to the door. Then she stops, thinks, and marches into Scrooge's office, coming out with her coffee cup.

BOBBIE JO: This is my coffee cup. (*Toasting.*) Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Good bye, Widow Cratchit! [*she exits to the SQUARE*]

BOBBIE JO: LEARN TO COUNT, BOBBIE JO.

SCROOGE: Can't count on anyone nowadays.

BOBBIE JO: YOU'VE GONE AND HIT A BRAND NEW LOW.

SCROOGE: "Whiny old voice" indeed!

BOBBIE JO: NOW WHERE THE HELL YOU GONNA GO?

SCROOGE: Well, she can go to the devil for all I care!

BOBBIE JO: NOT VERY SMART, BOBBIE JO . . . [*she exits*]

NARRATOR: And then, the radio on her office desk clicked on ...

CHORUS (*ON RADIO*): "GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN. LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY . . ."

NARRATOR: SCROOGE lunged at the RADIO to turn it off, knocking all the files onto the floor.

SCROOGE : I HATE CHRISTMAS!!

MUSIC NO. 6: BAND FLOURISHES

RADIO MAN WKRK: Howdy-ho-ho-ho, out there in radio land! Tonight, WKRK is proud to present a very special 'Christmas Eve'-ent. The Marley County Christmas Talent Show Farm-a-thon!

ENSEMBLE: [Cheers]

SCENE 3: THE TALENT SHOW / MARLEY HOTEL LOBBY

RADIO MAN: Tonight, the good people of this burg are puttin' on a show all to help their neighbors in need. Now here's the drill, folks. Sit back, enjoy the party, and when you call in with a generous pledge to the Farmer's Relief Fund, you can also vote for your favorite performer! One pledge equals one vote. Think about it. You'll be makin' the farmers a whole lot merrier and makin' our winning contestant fifty bucks richer! Now that's some Christmas cheer!

MUSIC NO. 7: HOUSETOP BOOGIE

RADIO MAN (cont'd): Now here to get the party rollin' is that hot pistol—

LAVINIA: Watch it, darlin'!

RADIO MAN: Lavinia Jillis! And the Two Cratchettes!

[LAVINIA, JANE, and TIM -in costume- enter and step to the microphone]

LAVINIA, JANE, and TIM: UP ON THE HOUSETOP, REINDEERS PAUSE,
OUT JUMPS (HO-HO-HO-HO) SANTA CLAUS!
DOWN THROUGH THE CHIMNEY WITH LOTS OF TOYS, ALL FOR THE LITTLE ONES' CHRISTMAS JOYS.
HO-HO-HO! WHO WOULDN'T GO? HO-HO-HO! WHO WOULDN'T GO?
UP ON THE HOUSETOP, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK!
DOWN THROUGH THE CHIMNEY WITH GOOD SAINT NICK! UP ON THE HOUSETOP.

LAVINIA: OLD KRIS KRINGLE SLIPPED ON A SHINGLE, ALL THE SLEIGH BELLS STARTED TO JINGLE.
HE'LL LEAVE THE PRESENTS AND THEN TAKE FLIGHT. GOODNIGHT, GOODNIGHT, GOODNIGHT!

LAVINIA, JANE, AND TIM: A-WELL-A CLICK-CLICK-CLICK. HEY, ROOTIE-TOOTIE!
OLD SAINT NICK, YOU KNOW YOUR DUTY. SLIDE DOWN THE CHIMNEY, WHAT A TRICK!
WHO WOULDN'T BOOGIE WITH GOOD SAINT NICK?
HO-HO-HO! WHO WOULDN'T GO? HO-HO-HO! WHO WOULDN'T GO?
UP ON THE HOUSETOP, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK,
DOWN THROUGH THE CHIMNEY WITH GOOD SAINT NICK!

JANE and TIM: REINDEER PAUSE,

LAVINIA: UP ON THE HOUSETOP!

JANE and TIM: SANTA CLAUS,

LAVINIA: SLIDE DOWN THE CHIMNEY!

LAVINIA, JANE, AND TIM: SLIDE DOWN THE CHIMNEY, WHAT A TRICK!
WHO WOULDN'T BOOGIE WITH GOOD SAINT NICK! CLICK-CLICK-CLICK!

ENSEMBLE: [Applauds]

RADIO MAN: Let's hear it now! And if you're just tunin' in, leave that dial right where it is for an important word from one of our generous sponsors. [ALL exit]

MUSIC NO. 8: TALENT SHOW UNDERSCORE

[Hotel Lobby]

[Hotel Lobby. DWIGHT enters, sweeping; establishes himself perhaps with some whistling. Then, BOBBIE JO enters.]

DWIGHT: So. The Prince of Darkness finally let you go.

BOBBIE JO: Dwight, I've made a real mess of things.

DWIGHT: You got that right. You just missed your kids' number.

BOBBIE JO: Oh, no! Well... how'd they do?

DWIGHT: I don't know. I missed it too.

BOBBIE JO: Dwight.

DWIGHT: Sorry. I ain't much in the mood at the moment.

BOBBIE JO: Dwight, don't let your uncle get your goat. He's just a mean old man.

DWIGHT: Aw, he ain't hurtin' anyone but himself.

BOBBIE JO: He ain't?

DWIGHT: I feel sorry for him! I do. But just once? I'd sure like to know why he's got it in for me.

LAVINIA: There you are!

BOBBIE JO: Vinny, is it too late to sign up for this thing?

LAVINIA: What?

BOBBIE JO: I want to enter the contest. I want to win that money.

LAVINIA: You want to sing on the radio?

BOBBIE JO: Don't sound so shocked. If I can find the nerve to sing in church I most surely can find it here!

DWIGHT: 'Atta girl!

LAVINIA: Ain't this kind of sudden?

BOBBIE JO: Please. No questions. Just put me on the bill and show me where I can pull my sorry self together.

LAVINIA: This way, Patsy Cline.

BOBBIE JO: Thanks! Oh, here's my coffee cup. [exits]

DWIGHT: Hey! If you need a song, I wrote a humdinger about a bottle! (To LAVINIA.) I write a lot of songs, y'know.

LAVINIA: Lest I'm mistaken, you're singin' one of 'em tonight. Shouldn't you at least be conscious for that?

DWIGHT: Oh, I'm all right.

LAVINIA: Oh no you ain't. Here. Fill this cup with java.

DWIGHT: I'd prefer eggnog.

LAVINIA: Dwight, maybe you don't know how good you are, but I do. Look. For most folks, life's just hard work and heartache interrupted by a bout or two of happiness. But the man who's got music in him? Well, he's been given a little touch of grace that can make things a little more bearable for the rest of us. So how 'bout you sober up and share your grace with us? After all, it is Christmas.

DWIGHT: Don't I know it?

LAVINIA: I can just imagine who's at the bottom of all this misery.

MUSIC NO. 9: "JINGLE-AYO"

RADIO MAN WKRG [entering]: Here's Contestant Number Three: Little Linda Lee!!

[LINDA LEE appears at microphone, sings in comic counterpoint as SCROOGE, bundled up and carrying files, wends his miserable way to HOTEL]

LINDA LEE: JINGLE BELLS! JINGLE BELLS! THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY-O.
WE DON'T NEED NO ONE-HORSE SLEIGH, THERE'S NO SNOW ON THE BAYOU.
JINGLE BELLS! JINGLE BELLS! PASS THAT CRAWFISH PIE-O.
SON OF A GUN, WE'RE GONNA HAVE SOME SOUTHERN FUN A-SINGIN' JINGLE-AYO!
THAT'S JINGLE BELLS ON THE BAYOU! *[she bows and exits]*

ENSEMBLE: *[Applauds]*

NARRATOR: SCROOGE had by now reached the HOTEL and entered the LOBBY.

MUSIC NO. 10: "JINGLE-AYO" UNDERSCORE

SCROOGE: My God. Bedlam! Christmas lights on Marley's portrait! Just look at what you've come to, Marley.

NARRATOR: The lights around the portrait flickered, and Marley's face seemed to come alive for an instant.

SCROOGE: Whoa! That radio show's playing havoc with the juice!

TIM: Guess so.

SCROOGE: What the devil?! *[TIM enters]*

TIM: Sorry I scared you, Mr. Scrooge.

SCROOGE: What are you lurking there for, boy?

TIM: I'm lookin' for my mama.

SCROOGE: Well, I'm looking for my mail.

TIM: Sir?

SCROOGE: What?

TIM: Do you think it's gonna snow for Christmas?

SCROOGE: What?

TIM: I sure hope it snows. Then I can go sleddin'.

SCROOGE: That is no concern of mine. What's this in my mail? A gift-wrapped sandwich? "Dear Mister Scrooge: No time to make dinner. Enjoy your leftover Mistletoe Meatloaf sandwich." Bah! *[starts to exit]*

TIM: Oh, Mr. Scrooge. Wait!

SCROOGE: What now?

TIM: I forgot to give this card to you before. Merry Christmas. I'm sorry you're so sad.

*[SCROOGE, taken aback, stares at Tim, then begins to exit.
DWIGHT enters, sees Scrooge but Scrooge does not see him.
Dwight and Tim silently watch Scrooge slowly climb stairs to his room.]*

CHARLEY: *[Entering, approaching microphone]* Folks, here's why I love Christmas. This morning me and my buddy Virgil lost one-third of our trio, thanks to that cold that's been goin' round. *[VIRGIL and RADIO MAN enter, joining him]* Well, it so happens that our friend from WKRG here was more than happy to give us a hand, just so we could sing for you tonight. Which just goes to show ya, you never know where help is gonna come from now, do you?

*[SCROOGE has reached the top of the stairs. He pauses but doesn't look back.
DWIGHT and TIM are still watching him. SCROOGE exits, slamming the door]*

MUSIC NO. 11: "WE THREE KINGS"

CHARLEY, VIRGIL and RADIO MAN: WE 3 KINGS OF ORIENT ARE.
BEARING GIFTS, WE TRAVERSE AFAR. FIELD AND FOUNTAIN, MOOR AND MOUNTAIN,
FOLLOWING YONDER STAR. O, STAR OF WONDER, STAR OF NIGHT. STAR WITH ROYAL BEAUTY
BRIGHT.
WESTWARD LEADING, STILL PROCEEDING, GUIDE US TO THY PERFECT LIGHT. *[exit]*

MUSIC NO. 12: WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

ENSEMBLE: WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

SCROOGE: *[Entering, pounding on floor]* Shut up!! Shut up, you fools! It's 11:50 at night!
And I'm in bed! *[no response from below]* ... I've got to drown that party out with the radio.
[Mimes turning on radio – which is, to his dismay, tuned to the festivities.]

ENSEMBLE: WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

MUSIC NO. 13: RADIO MUSIC

RADIO MAN WKRG: Live from the Marley Hotel, you are listening to –

SCROOGE: Arrgh!! Does *every* station have Christmas music?!!

ERIC HAGREEN AS RADIO ANNOUNCER #2: And now, the Cow-and-Cattle Report.

SCROOGE: Thank God. Something sane.

ERIC HAGREEN AS RADIO ANNOUNCER #2: Where you get the lowdown on the livestock—

SCROOGE and ERIC/RADIO ANNOUNCER #2 (simultaneously): And that’s no bull.

SCROOGE: Well. Might as well read my mail. “Subscribe to Life.” Forget that. What’s this? Oh, that boy’s Christmas card. For cryin’ out—

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: Suddenly, Scrooge’s radio started playin’ loud static.

SCROOGE: Stinkin’, lousy radio!

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: Scrooge put Tim’s card into his robe pocket, then he re-tuned the radio.

MARLEY: Now a word from our sponsor.

SCROOGE: Ah. A check.

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: Scrooge went to Marley’s portrait, took it down, opened the wall safe, deposited the check, closed the safe, and re-hung the portrait.

MARLEY: “Mind your own business!!” How often do we hear that phrase? But, gentlemen, do we really “know our business”? I’m speaking to you, Mister Dynamic Businessman of Today.

SCROOGE: Oh, good night. Listen to this hooley.

MARLEY: You’ve worked smart. You’ve worked tough. But do you really have true business savvy?

SCROOGE: For Pete’s sake, get to the pitch!

MARLEY: The Business you should mind is the Welfare of Mankind.

SCROOGE: Oh, Lord. I’m tuned to the preacher hour!

MARLEY: Now, don’t touch that dial!

SCROOGE: There’s an original line.

MARLEY: I mean you, Ebenezer Scrooge.

MUSIC NO. 14: MARLEY’S MANIFESTATION

[*MARLEY drops the ‘announcer bit’ and gets very serious*]

MARLEY: Yes, you, Ebenezer Scrooge. Mankind Is Your Business!

SCROOGE: I am having me one lulu of a hallucination.

MARLEY: Heed my warning, man.

SCROOGE: It's that woman's Mistletoe Meatloaf!

MARLEY: It's not the meatloaf, Scrooge.

SCROOGE: It's gotta be. I have got the heartburn from —What am I doing conversing with a radio?!

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: No matter what station Scrooge dialed, it was always Marley's voice.

MARLEY: Scrooge! It's Marley. I've come to save you!

SCROOGE: Marley?! This is crazy!!

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: Suddenly, Scrooge smashed his radio to the floor.

MARLEY: (Cries out in anguish.)

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: The room darkened. Marley's eyes in the portrait glowed green. The portrait fell, and the Wall-safe burst open. A green light blasted from the safe, and the safe belched money all over the room. Terrified, SCROOGE fell to his knees, caught in the shaft of light. From inside the safe, a HEAD appeared: MARLEY'S GHOST!

MARLEY: All right, Eb. Let's get down to brass tacks.

SCROOGE: It is you, Jacob!

MARLEY: That's right. Now listen and listen good. You still have a Hope and a Chance of escaping my fate.

SCROOGE: What fate might that be?

MARLEY: Eternal anguish and regret! Eternal frustration at not bein' able to balance The Books!

SCROOGE: But you were always good with the numbers, Marley.

MARLEY: I'm talking about the Ledger of Life, Scrooge!! Lest you change your ways, you're gonna join me — forever locked in the vault of regret, vainly sorting out the coin of a life misspent.

SCROOGE: Oh, say something to cheer me up here, would ya?

MARLEY: You are going to be haunted!!

SCROOGE: Gonna be? What the hell do you call this?!

MARLEY: This is my final offer of a Hope and a Chance, Scrooge! You better accept it. You shall be haunted by Three Spirits. One every night for the next three nights at the ghostly stroke of One.

SCROOGE: Three? Ain't that figure a little excessive?

MARLEY: Without their visits, you will most surely share my woeful fate.

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: Marley's Ghost vanished – and a bell began to slowly toll TWELVE --!

MUSIC NO. 15: CHRISTMAS PAST

SCROOGE: I've gone plumb crazy. I'm just gonna put this all back the way it was before I started hallucinating it around the room. There ... money back into the safe ... There ... portrait back on the wall ... I need a Bromo. That's what I need ... Ghosts, indeed! That "Cow and Cattle Report" was all [*belches*] bull!

NARRATOR: SCROOGE hopped into bed, robe and all, and pulled the cover over his head. The chimes of the midnight hour had finished sounding, and it was silent as SCROOGE slept. But then ... a long gong of ONE sounded, and then he heard a festive PARTY.

[PHANTOM] PARTYGOERS: OH CHRISTMAS TREE! OH CHRISTMAS TREE!
TOO BAD WE CAN'T AFFORD ONE! HA! HA! HA! WRECK THE HALLS WITH HOWLS OF MARLEY!
FA LA LA LA LA, LA LA LA LA! 'TIS THE SEASON TO BE SNARLY! FA LA LA LA LA, LA LA LA LA!

SCROOGE: Oh, for cryin' out loud! They're still carryin' on! I can't believe the nerve. One o'clock in the morning! [*PARTYGOERS abruptly stop*] One o'clock... What did Marley say about one o'clock? What, the door won't open?? Not a good sign.

NARRATOR: Beneath the BEDSHEET something began to rise. Like a Halloween spook, it rose and rose to its full height and then revealed itself. THE SPIRIT – OF CHRISTMAS PAST!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Land! These sheets are in dire need of some Clorox!

SCROOGE: A ghost!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Ah!! You gave me such a start, Eb! Goodness, look at you! You're a sight!

SCROOGE: I'm a sight? Who — or what — are you?

CHRISTMAS PAST: I'm the Spirit of Christmas Past, Eb. Your past.

SCROOGE: And what's your business, uh, ma'am?

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your welfare, young man.

SCROOGE: If that was the case, you'd let me sleep through the night.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Don't you be giving me any sass now, or I'll box yer ears!

SCROOGE: Ow!! I'm sorry, ma'am... uh, Spirit. So ... what are you gonna do to me, anyway?

CHRISTMAS PAST: I ain't gonna do anything to you that ain't already been done long ago. Now, come on. Let's go.

SCROOGE: Go? Go where?

CHRISTMAS PAST: A little trip down memory lane, honey.

SCROOGE: Just what are you talking about here?

CHRISTMAS PAST: You don't need to be afraid.

SCROOGE: I'm not afraid. We can't leave this room, that's all. That door won't open. How we gonna get out?

CHRISTMAS PAST: The heart will find a way, honey. Now, come on. Take my hand. I know it's been years since someone held your hand. I promise it will feel good.

MUSIC NO. 16: BOYHOOD

NARRATOR: SCROOGE took the SPIRIT's hand, and the room faded away.

SCROOGE'S MOTHER: (Hums a lullaby)

CHRISTMAS PAST: We have lot of things to remember. I believe you're remembering someone already, aren't ya?

SCROOGE: Mama.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Come on, baby. Let's go. Christmas 1905.

CHILDREN: JINGLE BELLS! JINGLE BELLS! JINGLE ALL THE WAY!
OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE IN A ONE HORSE OPEN SLEIGH!

SCENE 5: CHRISTMAS, 1905

BOY EB: [enters, laughing, and calling offstage.] Ha, ha, Fanny! Beat ya! Fair and square!

SCROOGE : Oh, my goodness. This is the parlor in my childhood home!

GIRL FANNY: I demand a rematch!

SCROOGE: Is that — is that Fanny?

GIRL FANNY: Ebenezer, you cheat!

SCROOGE: Fanny!

GIRL FANNY: We said start runnin' at the count of ten. You started at eight!

BOY EB: Did not. You can't count, that's all.

GIRL FANNY: Oooo! That is such a lie! I oughta write Santa and tell him to skip you this year.

BOY EB: You can't write and you know it. Can't write. Can't count. Can't do nothin'!

GIRL FANNY: Ebenezer Scrooge! You are just the meanest little cuss.

BOY EB: Aw, no I ain't.

GIRL FANNY: I'm not playin' with you anymore. Go away.

BOY EB: Huh?

GIRL FANNY: You know what happens to mean boys? You end up all alone with nary a friend in the world.

BOY EB: Hey, Fan. I didn't mean it. Hey, don't be mad at me.

GIRL FANNY: Aw, Eb! Come here, you big baby. ... Ha! Now I gotcha, and now I'm gonna tan your hide but good!

SCROOGE'S FATHER: Will you two shut the hell up?! [*enters; severe, cold, scary*] Screaming like a pair of banshees!

GIRL FANNY and BOY EB: Sorry, Daddy.

SCROOGE'S FATHER: Ebenezer. Come here. I wish to speak to you. Now.

BOY EB: Yessir.

SCROOGE'S FATHER: Son, you'll be spending Christmas with your Aunt Sarah.

BOY EB: Huh?

SCROOGE'S FATHER: She could use the company. You leave tomorrow.

BOY EB: But, Daddy. I don't like Aunt Sarah. And I know she hates me.

SCROOGE'S FATHER: Don't be rude, boy! Didn't your mama teach you manners?

BOY EB: Yessir.

SCROOGE'S FATHER: Then don't dishonor her memory by getting snotty with me. I've got business to attend to in the morning, so your sister will be taking you to the train.

BOY EB: Is Fanny goin' to Aunt Sarah's too?

SCROOGE'S FATHER: No, Eb. She isn't.

BOY EB: Just me?

SCROOGE'S FATHER: Fanny will help you pack, won't you, Fanny?

GIRL FANNY: Yes, Daddy.

SCROOGE'S FATHER: That's my girl. Now run along. [she looks at Eb, then exits] All right. That's that. Be a good boy, don't give Sarah any problems, and everything will be fine.

BOY EB: But, Daddy. I don't understand.

SCROOGE'S FATHER: I said that's that. Now go on. Go on with your playin'. (exits)

BOY EB: Daddy?! (remains, alone and confused)

NARRATOR: FANNY came back in with EB's coat and suitcase. A distant TRAIN WHISTLE blew.

BOY EB (*tearfully*): I don't understand!

MUSIC NO. 17: ANGEL BESIDE ME

GIRL FANNY: DON'T START CRYIN', EBENEZER. DON'T CRY, 'CAUSE NOTHIN'S WRONG.
JUST REMEMBER, EBENEZER, REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE STRONG,
LIKE MAMA TAUGHT US IN HER SONG.
THERE'S AN ANGEL BESIDE ME HOLDIN' MY HAND.
I'VE GOT AN ANGEL BESIDE ME HELPIN' ME STAND.
SHE'S A FRIEND AND A GUARDIAN THE OTHERS CAN'T SEE.
SHE WAS SENT FROM ABOVE JUST FOR ME.

BOY EB: WITH MY ANGEL TO GUIDE ME I'M NEVER AFRAID.
THERE'S A PLACE SHE CAN HIDE ME WHERE I'M NEVER BETRAYED.

BOTH: THOUGH THE PATH MAY BE STEEP AND THE MOUNTAIN SO TALL,
THERE'S AN ANGEL BESIDE ME WHO WON'T LET ME FALL.

CONDUCTOR: All aboard!

SCROOGE: You knew I was going away for longer than the holidays, didn't you, Fan?

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: Well, then FANNY gave Eb a gift: a bright red SCARF. She wrapped it around his neck, and she gave him a hug.

CHRISTMAS PAST: WHEN I NEED WORDS THAT WILL COMFORT ME, SHE WHISPERS IN MY EAR. FOR ALL I KNOW, SHE'S JUST MAKE BELIEVE. STILL, I'M AWF'LLY GLAD SHE'S NEAR.

CHARLEY [switching gears, and now THE TRAIN CONDUCTOR]: All aboard!
You gettin' on this train or what, son?

BOY EB: Yessir. I'm goin' away on business.

CONDUCTOR: Business, eh? Well, come along then. The smoker awaits you, Mister, ah —?

BOY EB: Mister Scrooge.

CONDUCTOR: Mister Scrooge! *(exits)*

BOY EB: NOW THE WIND'S BLOWIN' COLDER. I'M WANTIN' TO DIE.
BUT SHE'S TOUCHIN' MY SHOULDER
SO I'M NOT GONNA CRY. HALF A HOPE, HALF A MEM'RY, BUT SHE'S ALL MY OWN.
THERE'S AN ANGEL BESIDE ME SO I'M NOT ALONE. *(exits)*

CHRISTMAS PAST: Come on, Eb. Let's visit a happier time. Christmas, 1918.

SCENE 6: CHRISTMAS, 1918

SCROOGE: It's the stockroom of Kincaid's Emporium!

MUSIC NO. 18: ANGEL REPRISE

YOUNG EB [entering]: THERE'S AN ANGEL BESIDE ME HOLDING MY HAND; I'VE GOT AN ANGEL BESIDE ME HELPING ME STAND ... *(flustered)* -- Are those the right words, Dick?

DICK: Yes, Eb. Now come on. Finish practicin'. I want to get back to the buffet before that Turkey's picked clean.

SCROOGE: That's Dick Wilkins! From when we worked for Delbert! Lord!

CHRISTMAS PAST : That's right. We're at Kincaid's Emporium. And look at you! What are you so worked up about?

SCROOGE: I'm in love.

YOUNG EB: You think anyone's gonna come in here, Dick?

DICK: Are you kiddin'? With all the fun they're havin' out there?

YOUNG EB: Come on. Help me out. I want to make sure I know the words and all.

DICK: You know all the words, Eb. It's your delivery that's lackin'. For one thing, quit pacin'. You're serenadin' your girl, not checkin' inventory.

YOUNG EB: Stand still, y'mean?

DICK: Just sing from the heart. Let Belle know how much you love her. You can do that, can't you?

YOUNG EB: I believe I can. I'm proposin' to her, after all.

CHRISTMAS PAST: On Christmas Eve! Ain't you the romantic fool!

DICK: Try it again and pretend you're lookin' at Belle. Let her know you love her. But hurry up. I'm hungry.

YOUNG EB: All right. This is the last time.

YOU HAVE BEEN SENT FROM ABOVE TO ME, AN ANGEL BY MY SIDE – [*BELLE enters*]

MY DARLIN' BELLE, WON'T YOU ANSWER ME? TELL ME THAT YOU'LL BE MY BRIDE — (*sees Belle*)
Oh, No!

DICK: Haha!

BELLE: Mr. Scrooge, you're makin' me cry!

DICK: Oh, Belle. His singin' ain't that bad.

BELLE: You may take your leave, Mr. Wilkins.

DICK: My stomach eternally thanks you! (*exits*)

NARRATOR: Belle and Eb kissed.

SCROOGE: It's Belle! My darling, darling Belle.

BELLE: You are just full of surprises, young man.

YOUNG EB: Well, you've gone and ruined it. I was gonna serenade you tonight.

BELLE: Outside my window and all?

YOUNG EB: That's right.

BELLE: It's ten below, Eb. You would've froze to death before the second verse.

YOUNG EB: Reckon so.

BELLE: I would've had to bring you back to life. Somehow.

YOUNG EB: Oh, I think you'd figure out how.

BELLE: Eb!

NARRATOR: EB and BELLE kissed again – passionately.

SCROOGE: Belle. I did love you, you know!

CHRISTMAS PAST: Hush, Eb. This is the good part.

BELLE: We better get back to that party . . .

MUSIC NO. 19: PARTY MUSIC

NARRATOR: In the main store at KINCAID’S EMPORIUM, the party was in full swing.

DICK: *[enters]* A toast! A toast to the man throwin’ these festivities. My favorite boss: Delbert Kincaid!!

ENSEMBLE: [Cheers]

DELBERT: Thank you, Dick, thank you! You folks want to know why I love Christmas so much? Just take a look at yourselves. I tell ya, seein’ y’all havin’ a ball makes me one happy man! Yessir, friends, it’s times like this when I can honestly say: Business couldn’t be better!

ENSEMBLE: [Cheers]

CHRISTMAS PAST: Boy, do they love this Delbert feller.

SCROOGE: For good reason! I tell you, there was no kinder or fairer employer than Delbert Kincaid. Never ran us ragged, never kept us late, never...

CHRISTMAS PAST: What did you say? I didn’t hear ya, dear.

SCROOGE: Nothing. It’s just that . . . Nothing.

CHRISTMAS PAST: All right.

DELBERT: Let’s get back to cuttin’ a rug!

NARRATOR: FANNY – frail and haggard – entered the party, with a small suitcase. DICK pointed out EB, dancing with BELLE. FANNY crossed the dance floor to Eb and he bumped into her.

YOUNG EB: Oh! ’Scuse me, Miss. I got me two left feet.

FANNY: And you always told me I was the one who couldn’t count, Eb.

YOUNG EB: *(Staring at her, stunned)* Fanny?

FANNY: Hey, Eb.

YOUNG EB: Fanny! (*embraces her*) Oh, Fanny. It's really you!

FANNY: Baby brother, I know it's been a long time. Don't be mad at me now.

YOUNG EB: What are you saying? This is wonderful. Wonderful! Look, Belle. It's my sister! Fanny!

FANNY: Pleased to meet you — (*she falters, feeling faint*)

BELLE: Are you all right, honey?

FANNY: I think I need to sit down.

BELLE: I'll get you some water. [*exits*]

YOUNG EB: Here, Fanny. You do look a little peaked.

FANNY: I know I just dropped out of the sky here, Eb, but . . . (*Looks at him a moment.*)
Can I stay with you a while? I don't have no one else to turn to.

YOUNG EB: Of course!

FANNY: I'll earn my keep. You know I will. (*Breaks down, weeping.*) Thank God I found you!

YOUNG EB: Honey! What's the matter? Just tell me.

FANNY: I need your help, Eb. I'm ... I'm with child.

YOUNG EB: And you're with family. Nothin' to cry about here.

FANNY: Bless you!

DELBERT: Let's drink to the season, all you wonderful people!

YOUNG EB: You're home now, Fan. Everything's gonna be fine. [*BELLE enters*]

DELBERT: A toast! To Christmas. And all the Christmases yet to come!

YOUNG EB: We'll get by. We will. After all, as a senior clerk at this fine establishment,
I'm gonna be a rich man!

DELBERT: Merry Christmas!

ALL: Merry Christmas!

DELBERT: And God bless us!

YOUNG EB: God bless us— (*hugging FANNY and BELLE*) —every one!

[Actors exit, leaving SCROOGE and CHRISTMAS PAST]

MUSIC NO. 20: SILENT NIGHT

CHRISTMAS PAST: Well. Then what? Did Fanny move in?

SCROOGE: Yep. And I did all I could to bring home a little more bacon. But it was tough.

CHRISTMAS PAST: She had her baby?

SCROOGE: She had her baby all right. And nearly died havin' him.

CHRISTMAS PAST: What was that child's name again?

SCROOGE: Dwight.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Dwight. That's right. And Belle? You two didn't get hitched?

SCROOGE: Oh, no. How could we? With Fanny and all.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Your sister never was the same after that baby, was she?

SCROOGE: No. But Belle. Belle took such good care of her.

CHRISTMAS PAST: And you kept workin' at Delbert's store. . .

SCROOGE: That's right. Until the place folded. Delbert was all heart, but he didn't know beans about business. Truth to tell neither did I until I met Marley.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Mr. Marley turned things round for y'all?

SCROOGE: Well, things sure needed turnin' round! Fanny was sicker than ever. Hell, she was dying, and we all knew it. So I got me on the ground floor of a business that was more than just a promise.

CHRISTMAS PAST: And more like a promissory note?

SCROOGE: I mean it put food on the table! Listen, I didn't like how Marley did business. But I learned quick enough all about the bottom line. The plain and simple fact is this: That job saved our lives.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Not all of 'em, Eb.

SCENE 7: CHRISTMAS, 1920

NARRATOR: Christmas 1920, and we're in FANNY'S bedroom, where FANNY lies gravely ill, tended to by BELLE and DOC CHASE. YOUNG EB runs in --wearing the little red SCARF Fanny gave him as a child.

BELLE: Where have you been?!

YOUNG EB: Marley and I, we had to —

BELLE: Oh, it doesn't matter! Just go to her.

YOUNG EB: Is she —?

BELLE: Go to her.

SCROOGE: Spirit. Please, don't make me see this.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Eb. You've got to remember.

YOUNG EB: Fan!

MUSIC NO. 21: FANNY'S DEATH

FANNY: Hey, Eb. Don't be mad at me.

YOUNG EB: What are you doin' lollygagging here in bed?

FANNY: I'm sorry. I'm just all tired out.

YOUNG EB: Can't you do anything for her, Doc?!

DOC CHASE: Eb. I —

FANNY: Don't you go blamin' Doc here for my bad heart. I think you've outgrown this scarf I gave you, honey.

YOUNG EB: You're gonna get better. I'm gonna see to that!

FANNY: No.

YOUNG EB: I'll find you better medicine. Just hang on!

FANNY: Eb, give me your hand. Please take care of Dwight.

SCROOGE: Fanny!

YOUNG EB: Don't you leave me, Fanny!

FANNY: I tried hard, Eb, but I ain't as strong as you. Take care of my boy.

YOUNG EB : I will, honey. I promise.

SCROOGE: Fanny! Forgive me!

FANNY: Make him strong, Eb.

NARRATOR: And Fanny ... passed into eternity.

YOUNG EB: No!

DOC CHASE: I'm sorry.

YOUNG EB: Didn't I pay you enough? Is that why she had to die?

DOC CHASE: Eb, it's not like that.

BELLE: Eb —

YOUNG EB: No. If I had the money, I could have gotten her well. I could have!

BELLE: Eb, she was a sickly girl.

YOUNG EB: Don't tell me! I could have saved her! But I'm just too damn poor!

BELLE: Oh, honey —

YOUNG EB: Leave me alone! Just leave us alone!

MUSIC NO. 22: GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN

ENSEMBLE *as Carolers*: GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN, LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY.
REMEMBER —

YOUNG EB: Shut up! Just shut the hell up! [*Actors exit, leaving SCROOGE & CHRISTMAS PAST*]

SCROOGE: No more. Please. No more.

CHRISTMAS PAST: Just one more Christmas, Eb.

SCROOGE: Why are you doing this to me?! I can't change what was!

CHRISTMAS PAST: That Christmas three years later. A lot happened in those three years.

SCROOGE: I finally got out of the poorhouse, if that's what you mean! I made some big changes in my life!

CHRISTMAS PAST: And Belle? I believe she made some changes too.

SCENE 8: CHRISTMAS, 1923

NARRATOR: At the Train Station, Belle stood on the platform with her luggage, when Eb ran on. He wore an expensive overcoat now. But still wore the Little Red Scarf.

YOUNG EB: Belle!

BELLE: Eb.

YOUNG EB: You gonna tell me what's goin' on here? I called your place and all I got from Lulu was some song-and-dance about—

BELLE: Eb, I'm gettin' on the next train. I won't be comin' back.

YOUNG EB: I don't understand . . . Why?

BELLE: Do the reasons really matter to you?

YOUNG EB: What's that supposed to mean?

BELLE: What's really important is the next grand scheme. The next big killing.

YOUNG EB: Oh, so makin' money's a bad thing now! Gal, you don't make sense.

BELLE: Used to be there was no shame in being poor, Eb.

YOUNG EB: I'm building a future here!

BELLE: No, you're buildin' a wall! And I don't know if it's 'cause you're mad at the world or just scared of it. All I know is that wall's gotten so high I can't get past it.

YOUNG EB: That ain't true.

BELLE: And, Eb? I don't want to get past it. The boy I loved ain't nowhere to be found there.

YOUNG EB: The boy you loved was a fool.

BELLE: Well, that fool loved me. And prized me above all else. But now he's found a new love. A much more dazzlin' prize.

MUSIC NO. 23: A GOLDEN IDOL

BELLE: THE BIBLE SAYS, "WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO."

YOUNG EB: Belle, look at what I've made of myself! Look at what I've got!

BELLE: Look at what you've lost.
WE SHARED A TREASURE. WE SPOKE A VOW. A SACRED TREASURE. WHERE IS IT NOW?
IT'S ALL BEEN SHATTERED BY THE POWER OF A GOLDEN IDOL, A GOLDEN IDOL,
BUT THERE'S NO PLACE FOR A GOLDEN IDOL IN A HOUSE OF LOVE.

YOUNG EB: All we've been through and you still don't know what really matters.

BELLE: I guess not.
OUR LOVE WAS PRECIOUS WHEN TIMES WERE TOUGH.
BUT FOR A RICH MAN I GUESS IT'S NOT ENOUGH.
AND I WON'T FIGHT IT 'CAUSE I CAN'T WIN. THE GOLDEN IDOL — THE GOLDEN IDOL —
YOUR GOLDEN IDOL'S GONNA TELL YOU, ANY OTHER LOVE'S A SIN.

ENSEMBLE: OH. I CAN'T WIN. GOLDEN IDOL. GOLDEN IDOL.
YOUR GOLDEN IDOL'S GONNA TELL YOU ANY OTHER LOVE'S A SIN.

YOUNG EB: Honey.

BELLE: USED TO BE YOU KNELT TO ME, WHEN OUR LOVE WAS YOUNG AND VITAL.
NOW WITHIN YOUR EYES I SEE THE CHILLY GLEAM OF A GOLDEN IDOL.
AND I KNOW THAT I'VE LOST. JUST MY HEART, THAT'S ALL IT COST.

ENSEMBLE:
USED TO BE. WHEN OUR LOVE WAS YOUNG AND VITAL. NOW I SEE. GOLDEN IDOL. OO. AH!

BELLE: ANOTHER IDOL IS IN MY PLACE, A GOLDEN IDOL WITHOUT A FACE.
FOR NOW YOU TREASURE NOTHING ELSE ABOVE A GOLDEN IDOL, A GOLDEN IDOL,
BUT THERE'S NO PLACE FOR A GOLDEN IDOL IN A HOUSE OF LOVE.
NO, THERE AIN'T NO PLACE FOR A GOLDEN IDOL IN A HOUSE OF LOVE.
A HOUSE OF LOVE. A HOUSE OF LOVE.

ENSEMBLE: ANOTHER IDOL. OO. A GOLDEN IDOL. OO. OH. NOTHING ELSE ABOVE.
GOLDEN IDOL. GOLDEN IDOL. BUT THERE'S NO PLACE FOR A GOLDEN IDOL IN A HOUSE OF LOVE.
AH. A HOUSE OF LOVE. A HOUSE OF LOVE. AH!

CONDUCTOR: All aboard! *[BELLE exits. YOUNG EB remains motionless]*

CHRISTMAS PAST: Why didn't you stop her?

SCROOGE: Because she was right.

MUSIC NO. 24: CHRISTMAS PRESENT
[Young EB exits slowly]

CHRISTMAS PAST: So you let her go. You turned your back on all that you had been ... all that
You'd loved . . . all that you had lost. And as the years went by, you finally possessed that which
nobody could take away from you. But you lost your soul in the trade. *[exits]*

CLERK: *[running on, encounters YOUNG EB]* Mr. Scrooge! Excuse me, sir, Mr. Scrooge?

NARRATOR: Midnight began to toll.

YOUNG EB: *(coldly)* What?

CLERK: I've just received word that Mr. Marley has died.

YOUNG EB: Oh?

CLERK: Sir? I'm sorry. Is there something you wish me to do?

YOUNG EB: Take his name off my office door. *[exits]*

NARRATOR: And as Eb disappeared into the darkness, he dropped the red scarf to the ground.

SCROOGE: You fool! Come back! The red scarf *(to himself:)* You fool. *[he weeps]*

NARRATOR: The hour of ONE.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: *[entering, laughing. He is a 'good ole boy Santa Claus.']* Hahahaha!!

SCROOGE: Now what?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Ho! Ho! Ho!

SCROOGE: Oh, no, no, no.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Ebenezer Scrooge!

SCROOGE: Spirit number two, I reckon.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Quit your boo-hooing, old man. Pronto!

SCROOGE: What!?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Come on, Eb! We're gonna have us some fun!

SCROOGE: You're the Spirit of Christmas Present?!

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Yes, Virginia. Who else? And I have a lot of stops to make tonight, so if you don't mind! Get the lead out and let's get a move-on!

SCROOGE: You are kidding.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: And bundle up, man! Get that scarf around your neck! It gets mighty nippy in that sleigh.

SCROOGE: Sleigh?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: You'll be ridin' shotgun. Now, come on, y'old party pooper! Let's start deckin' them halls!!

NARRATOR: The Spirit grabbed SCROOGE and they exited -- spectacularly. Now we hear the happy sounds of the TALENT SHOW.

LAVINIA, JANE, TIM: UP ON THE ROOFTOP, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK!
DOWN THROUGH THE CHIMNEY WITH GOOD SAINT NICK! GOOD SAINT NICK! GOOD SAINT...

LINDA LEE: JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS!

NARRATOR: In the darkness, there it is! Santa's reindeer and sleigh -- streaking across the night sky. With a howling Mr. Scrooge, along for the ride! ... End of Act One. There'll be a 10-minute intermission.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: THE CRATCHIT TRAILER, CHRISTMAS DAY, NOON

MUSIC NO. 25: LESS IS MORE

NARRATOR: When last we left the story, Santa's sleigh was streaking across the night sky. Now the sleigh's dropped off Scrooge and the SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT at the home of the Cratchits: an old, cramped trailer.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: So, what d'ya think, you sourpuss? The old sleigh rides pretty smooth, huh?

SCROOGE: I'll stick with my old Studebaker, thank you very much.

TIM: CRANBERRY...CRANBERRY...CRANBERRY...POPCORN —

SCROOGE: Where are we? Who are those children there?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: You don't recognize the Widow Cratchit's kids?

SCROOGE: This is Cratchit's place? It isn't much, is it?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Depends on what you're appraising.

TIM: CRANBERRY...CRANBERRY...CRANBERRY...POPCORN —

JANE: Tim, you're puttin' too many cranberries 'tween the popcorn again!

TIM: Am not!

SCROOGE: What're they doing? Preparing lunch?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Scrooge! They're preparin' for the arrival of the tree! It's Christmas day and mama's shoppin' for a tree. Even though she lost her job, she's gonna give these kids a Christmas they'll remember.

SCROOGE: I see...

JANE: Tim! I know what I'm talkin' about here. Mr. Kane, my art teacher —

TIM: The one you're all goo-goo for?

JANE: Hush! I'm tryin' to teach you somethin' about aesthetics.

TIM: Es — what?

JANE: Tim. As an artist, I have learned a thing or two about balance and economy.

TIM: Economy. We do that all the time 'round here.

JANE: Exactly. Now apply it to that popcorn you're stringin' and we shall have us a truly harmonious tree. Remember: Less is More. So, lighten up on those cranberries!

TIM: Whatever you say, darlin' sister. CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN. CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN.

JANE: CRANBERRY, POPCORN, CRANBERRY, POPCORN.

TIM: CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN; CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN

JANE : THERE IS AN ART TO GRACIOUS LIVING THAT GRACIOUS PEOPLE CAN'T IGNORE: DON'T LET YOUR GEEGAWES GET TOO GAUDY, AND JUST REMEMBER LESS IS MORE.

TIM: CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN: CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN.

JANE: YOU DON'T NEED PICTURES IN THE PARLOR, THAT'S WHAT A CALENDAR IS FOR. IF YOU WANT VIEWS, LOOK OUT THE WINDOW. AND TELL YOURSELF THAT LESS IS MORE.

TIM: All right! IF YOU CAN'T BUY A CHAIR TO SIT ON BECAUSE YOU ARE SO AWFUL POOR. LAY ON THE FLOOR, STARE AT THE CEILING, AND TELL YOURSELF THAT LESS IS MORE.

JANE: CRANBERRY, POPCORN, CRANBERRY, POPCORN.

TIM: CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN; CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN

JANE: WHEN MAMA SEWS FOR ME A NEW DRESS SHE WANTS THE SKIRT TO REACH THE FLOOR. I THINK OF WHAT THE BOYS ALL TELL ME AND I SAY "MAMA, LESS IS MORE."

TIM: MY TEACHER TRIED TO TEACH ME MANNERS UNTIL MY TEACHING PLACE WAS SORE. SHE ASKED ME, "HAVE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON?" I SAID, "DEAR TEACHER, LESS IS MORE."

JANE: CRANBERRY, POPCORN, CRANBERRY, POPCORN.

TIM: CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, CRANBERRY, POPCORN. CRANBERRY, POPCORN.

JANE and TIM: AND WHEN I'M SICK AND FEELIN' PUNKY, THE CASTOR OIL MOM STARTS TO POUR. I TELL HER, "FIND ANOTHER DOCTOR WHO RECOMMENDS THAT LESS IS MORE."
OH, WHEN I DIE AND GO TO HEAVEN -- OH, WHEN I REACH THAT FARTHER SHORE THEY'LL ASK ME ALL ABOUT MY GOOD DEEDS, AND I'LL EXPLAIN THAT LESS IS MORE.

LAVINIA: *[entering]* Merry Christmas, darlins'!

JANE and TIM: The Christmas tree!

BOBBIE JO: *[revealing the comically scrawny TREE]* Ta-da.

JANE: Gee, Mom. It's ... nice.

TIM: Remember what you said. Less is more.

BOBBIE JO: It ain't much, kids. But it's ours. Now here. Do something festive to it.

LAVINIA: That tree lot guy is takin' greedy lessons from Scrooge! He should be givin' 'em away today. Even that huge one nobody can afford. Now it's just gonna sit there, all alone on Christmas day.

BOBBIE JO: That tree was bigger than this trailer, Vinny. This will do us fine.

JANE: Tim. Let us commence trimmin'. Hand me one of my popcorn strands, please.

[TIM hands Jane popcorn strand, who drapes it around tree; it looks pathetic.]

TIM: *(sarcastically)* That's real harmonious lookin'.

JANE: Tim Cratchit, you brat!

TIM: What? I didn't say nothin'!

BOBBIE JO: Hey! I said I'd get us a tree. I got us a tree! But if you two are gonna fight over it 'stead of decorating it, it's going right in the garbage! Now get on with it! Christmas is already half over!

JANE and TIM: Sorry, Mom.

BOBBIE JO: Oh, kids. No. I'm sorry. I'm just — I'm tired. I'm sorry. *(pause)*

LAVINIA: Wait a minute! Where's my head? I got some twinkly lights hangin' 'round old man Marley at the hotel. Why don't you two kids go fetch 'em? That'll gussy that tree up.

JANE: How superb! Come on, Tim.

BOBBIE JO: Whoa! It's too icy out there for Tim!

TIM: Mom!

LAVINIA: This is an emergency, Bobbie Jo. That tree needs help.

TIM: Come on, Mom! I'm not a baby!

BOBBIE JO: I know that, Tim. It's just —

JANE: We'll walk real slow, Mom. Promise.

LAVINIA: That's right. They're just gonna take a nice relaxin' stroll. (*pointedly:*) So you can relax.

TIM: Please!

BOBBIE JO: You better be extra, extra careful, young man.

TIM: I will, I will!

BOBBIE JO: And you, Miss, you better be extra watchful.

JANE: Yes, Mama. Come along, Tim, and I'll tell you how "White Space" is used by The Artist.

TIM: And I'll tell you how White Snow is used by The Sled. [*TIM, JANE exit*]

BOBBIE JO: Vinny. I'm sorry. I know I'm being a real pill.

LAVINIA: The long-lasting kind, dear. All right now. Are you gonna tell me what this mood is all about? Because ever since last night —

BOBBIE JO: I just wanted to give them some sort of a Christmas and I've ruined it!

LAVINIA: What are you talkin' about?

BOBBIE JO: This is what I'm talkin' about! This! A letter from Tim's doctors. Y'know, over in Preston? Well, they say here they can't get through to me on the phone. Of course they can't, we don't have one anymore. And they're telling me they won't help Tim anymore 'cause I ain't payin' the bills, Vinny. Well, I couldn't pay the bills when I was employed. But now that I've gone and lost my job — [*weeps*]

LAVINIA: What?!

BOBBIE JO: We'll be flat broke by New Years!

LAVINIA: Oh, darlin'! Come here. . . (*envelops BOBBIE JO in embrace*)

BOBBIE JO: All because I had to give old man Scrooge a piece of my mind!

SCROOGE: Cratchit. I had no idea . . .

LAVINIA: Oh, why do you always keep your troubles to yourself? They don't get solved any quicker that way. Clue your friends in every once and a while, okay?

SCROOGE: Spirit, if that boy needs help, there are resources —

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Oh, let him die.

SCROOGE: Die? You mean —?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: He'll finally be contributing to the common good.

LAVINIA: Now come on, you. We'll get those bills paid. Somehow. I promise.

BOBBIE JO: Vinny.

LAVINIA: And stop berating yourself! You're a good mama and one strong woman. You'll get through this. Give yourself some credit!

BOBBIE JO: Please. Don't use that word. "Credit!"

LAVINIA: Ha! Look at it this way. You hated workin' for that old so and so anyway!

BOBBIE JO: That old so and so paid me real money. And as long as he kept a wall between us, he didn't bother me too much. Silly old miser.

LAVINIA: There ya go. Now, come on. There's work to do before the kids return. First, we wrap these gifts I brought for them.

BOBBIE JO: Vinny!

LAVINIA: Then we park 'em under that twig there, baste that bird in the oven, set a table, fix a coupla' highballs, and kick back!

MUSIC NO. 26: LIFE GOES TO SHOW YA

BOBBIE JO: There's a lesson I'm supposed to be learnin' here, isn't there?

LAVINIA: Well. As my husband Mr. Jillis always said — before he left me — the more you study at the school of hard knocks, the less you learn.

BOBBIE JO: Sure seems that way.

WELL, ME AND TOM, WE MARRIED YOUNG. I THOUGHT HE WAS THE ONE THAT HUNG THE STARS UP IN HEAVEN — REMEMBER WE WERE VERY YOUNG.

WE STARTED OUT WITHOUT A DIME, BUT WE WERE HAPPY ALL THE TIME, WELL, MOST OF THE TIME, LIFE'S HARD WITHOUT A DIME.

THEN THE KIDS CAME 'ROUND, AND WE WERE WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE.

RICH IN LOVE, BUT LOVE CAN'T FEED A BABY.
THEN SOME FOLKS WE NEVER KNEW, THEY STARTED UP A WAR.
AND TOM'S LAST WORDS WERE "BE HOME CHRISTMAS — MAYBE."
NOW IN THE EYES OF JANE AND TIM, I SOMETIMES THINK I LOOK ON HIM,
AND I KNOW THAT HE SEES ME THROUGH THE EYES OF JANE AND TIM.
WELL, LIFE GOES TO SHOW YA, IT'S ALWAYS GOT A CURVE TO THROW YA,
AND THERE REALLY AIN'T NO SENSE IN TRYIN' TO PUZZLE OUT
WHAT THIS THING CALLED LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.

LAVINIA: Keep lookin' in those kids' faces. You'll find the answers. I'd sure like to have a face to look into.

BOBBIE JO: Vinny.

LAVINIA: Then again, you can look a man straight in the eye and never see the truth.
Or you can pretend you don't.
WE BID THE ROAD A FOND FAREWELL. WE SAVED AND BOUGHT THAT OLD HOTEL.
PEOPLE SAID I WAS CRAZY BUT I BELIEVED HE WOULD STAY A SPELL.
WE THOUGHT THAT LOVE WOULD SEE US THROUGH, BUT SOON HE MISSED THE LIFE HE KNEW.
ONE MORNING HE LEFT ME, I'D'VE FOLLOWED — IF HE ASKED ME TO.
WELL, LIFE GOES TO SHOW YA — IT'S ALWAYS GOT A CURVE TO THROW YA,
AND THERE REALLY AIN'T NO SENSE IN TRYIN' TO PUZZLE OUT
WHAT THIS THING CALLED LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.

BOBBIE JO and LAVINIA: WELL, LIFE GOES TO SHOW YA,
IT'S ALWAYS GOT A CURVE TO THROW YA,
AND THERE REALLY AIN'T NO SENSE IN TRYIN' TO PUZZLE OUT
WHAT THIS THING CALLED LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.
WHAT THIS THING CALLED LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. MM-MM

LAVINIA: Those twinkly lights are gonna burn this little tree right up.

BOBBIE JO: Maybe we'll just wear 'em ourselves then!

LAVINIA: No, thank you, my dear. I was lit up enough last night.

BOBBIE JO: You weren't the only one!

LAVINIA: I know! That Dwight! I still cannot believe he won the talent show.

SCROOGE: Dwight won that talent show?

BOBBIE JO: They said the switchboards were jammed after his song. He won fair and square!

LAVINIA: He did pull out the stops.

BOBBIE JO: He was good.

LAVINIA: He was drunk.

NARRATOR: The door opened, and the tip of a HUGE CHRISTMAS TREE poked through.

BOBBIE JO and LAVINIA [*screaming with delight*]: What is that?!

DWIGHT: Maybe we should set this up outside, Bobbie Jo? \

BOBBIE JO: Dwight! Is that you?

TIM: Mom! Dwight bought the big tree!

DWIGHT: Hurry, now. It's heavy!

BOBBIE JO: But it won't even fit through the door!

LAVINIA: I say just stick it through the window!

TIM / JANE: Yeah!

BOBBIE JO: Go on then!

LAVINIA: I'll set another place for dinner.

TIM: Quick, Mom! Open the window! Yippee! And that's just the top!

JANE: See, Tim? Balance and economy. Just enough tree for the room.

BOBBIE JO: Dwight, you are just full of surprises, young man!

DWIGHT: Well, I was sittin' there in the lobby when these two showed up to steal the decorations. And it occurred to me that my prize money had a higher purpose than drownin' my Christmas blues.

JANE: I plugged in the lights on the treetop!

ALL: Oooh!!

DWIGHT: I ain't got the blues anymore, that's for sure.

BOBBIE JO: You know what? I don't either. So why don't you kids put those presents under that big old tree before Christmas is over?

JANE and TIM: Presents?

BOBBIE JO: Looks like Santa dropped by today after all.

JANE and TIM: Presents!! Wow!

MUSIC NO. 27: CAROLS

BOBBIE JO: Thank you, Dwight. Thank you, Vinny. A Merry Christmas to ya. (*hugs all around*)

SCROOGE: Those twinkly lights are kinda pretty, aren't they? [*ALL but SCROOGE & SPIRIT exit*]
Oh! Can't we stay a little longer with them, Spirit?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: I have a lot of business to attend to tonight, Eb. Surely you understand that?

SCROOGE: Of course. But ... well, I'm curious now about Dwight in that radio show.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Me too. But it happened last night. I can't just go bendin' the rules of time and space, can I?

SCROOGE: Can't you? This once? I mean, it might be . . .

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Might be what?

SCROOGE: Uh fun?

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: Well now! Since you put it that way. Just for you, Eb.

SCENE 2: THE TALENT SHOW

CHARLEY: So the big Radio Broadcast was happenin' at the Marley Hotel. All the townsfolk are there – including of course, yours truly.

[*BOBBIE JO, JANE, TIM, LAVINIA, LINDA LEE, VIRGIL, et al.*
DORIS nervously watches her KIDDY CHOIR finish their number]

KIDDY CHOIR [TIM/JANE] FIIIIIIIVE GOOOOOLDEEEEN RIIIIIIIIIIINGS!

[*A beat. VIRGIL applauds but is quickly stifled by the others*]

FOUR CALLIN' BIRDS — THREE FRENCH HENS — TWO TURTLE DOVES... (*slight, evil pause*)
AND A PARK BENCH IN A PEAR TREE!!

ENSEMBLE: [*relieved it's over, applauding wildly*] {*DORIS runs off in humiliation*}

RADIO MAN WKRK: Doris Peach and her kiddy choir! Now remember, each pledge you make to the Farmer's Fund counts as one vote. So do help us out with whatever you can. And right now, help me welcome our next contestant – Dwight Scrooge!

DWIGHT: [*drunk*] Hey y'all out there in radioland! Can ya hear me good enough? Whoops, feedback! Don't know my own strength! Hahaha! Uh.... (*pause*) Well. Here I am! It's my turn. Yeah. Well... (*pause*) I'd like to sing now for y'all... somethin'.

VIRGIL: Hey, Dwight! Sing that bottle song!

DWIGHT: Shut up! I'm waitin' to be inspired here.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: [*as if blowing a TRAIN WHISTLE*] Woo-oo-Woo!

DWIGHT: (inspired:) Yeah.

MUSIC NO. 28: THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN

DWIGHT: I'M RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN... RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN...
IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE... AND I'M FEELIN' FINE... I GOTTA MAKE UP ONE MORE LINE...
I'M RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN. I'M RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.
RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.
I HEAR THAT OLD CONDUCTOR CALLIN' "ALL ABOARD THE YULETIDE CANNONBALL!"

LAVINIA: WOO-WOO!

DWIGHT: AND NOW I'M RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.
OUT ON THE FLATCAR, THE KIDS HAVE BUILT A SNOWMAN,
AND IN THE SMOKER, THEY'RE LIGHTIN' UP A TREE!
NOBODY'S SLEEPIN' — THE BAND IS IN THE PULLMAN AND IT'S AN ALL-NIGHT SANTA JAMBOREE!
SO JOIN ME ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN. LEAVE BEHIND THAT OLD, COLD PAIN.
WE'RE BOOKED FOR HAPPINESS AND BOUND FOR FUN, THERE'S ROOM ON BOARD FOR
EV'RYONE.

ENSEMBLE: WOO-WOO!

DWIGHT: JOIN ME ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.
WHEN YOU RIDE THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN, YOU TRAVEL THROUGH THE PAST AGAIN.
THE WINDOWS GLOW LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE, EACH SHINING LIGHT'S A MEMORY,

ENSEMBLE: WOO-WOO!

DWIGHT: RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.
THERE IN THE FIRST CAR, I SEE MY SWEET YOUNG MOTHER,
WHO WENT TO HEAVEN ONE COLD CHRISTMAS DAY.
HER CHRISTMAS WISH IS THAT I SHOULD FIND ANOTHER
TO LOVE ME IN THE SAME UNSELFISH WAY. AND NOW SHE'S RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.
AND IN MY HEART SHE LIVES AGAIN.
ALTHOUGH I KNOW SHE ABIDES WITH ME, AT CHRISTMAS TIME SHE RIDES WITH ME.

ENSEMBLE: WOO-WOO!

DWIGHT: RIDIN' ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN.

VIRGIL: THE DINER'S SERVIN' TURKEY —
ALL: ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN!

LINDA LEE: THE BOX CAR'S FULL OF PRESENTS —
ALL: ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN!

TIM / JANE: THE STOCKCAR'S FULL OF REINDEER —
ALL: ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN!

LAVINIA: THE DWIGHT IS FULL OF WASSAIL —
ALL: ON THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN!

DWIGHT (with choral back-up): AND UP IN THE DAY COACH I HEAR SOMEBODY PRAYIN',
THANKIN' GOD, LIKE THE SHEPHERDS LONG AGO. AND WHEN I COUNT MY BLESSINGS
THAT I RECEIVE AT CHRISTMAS I SEEM TO HEAR THE ANGELS SINGIN':

TIM / JANE: "GLO-RIA —

DORIS and KIDDY CHOIR: — IN EXCELSIS DEO."

DWIGHT: BACK IN THE FREIGHT CAR, THERE'S SEVEN TONS OF FRUITCAKE.
IT SLOWS US DOWN WHEN WE GO UP A HILL. THEN WE START SINGIN',
AND SOON THE ENGINE'S SAYIN': "I THINK I CAN — IN FACT, I KNOW I WILL!"

ENSEMBLE: WOO-WOO!! WOO-WOO! WOO-WOO-WOO-WOOOOOO!

SCROOGE: (joyful) WOO-WOO!!

(ALL onstage stop, unsure of what they've just heard.)

DWIGHT: That's some wild feedback! [*as SCROOGE draws closer, "recognizing" them*]:
ALL ABOARD THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN! TIM AND VINNY, BOBBIE JO, AND JANE!
TOGETHER, WE MAKE A FAMILY, HIM AND HER AND YOU AND ME!

ALL: WOO-WOO!

DWIGHT: ALL ABOARD THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN! THE ONE THING MISSIN' IS UNCLE EBENEZER.
HE'S ALWAYS GOT SOME CHRISTMAS EVE EXCUSE.
BUT SINCE IT'S MY TRAIN, I'LL GRAB THAT MEAN OLE' GEEZER,
AND PARK HIS BONY BUTT IN THE CABOOSE
AND NOW WE'RE ALL ABOARD THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN. WE GOT A JOY WE CAN'T CONTAIN!
THE WHISTLE CALLS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, "IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME, SO COME AND RIDE!"
ALL: WOO-WOO!

DWIGHT: "COME AND RIDE THE CHRISTMAS TRAIN!"
ALL: WOO-WOO! WOO-WOO! WOO-WOO-WOO-WOOOOOO!

(ALL applaud wildly; laughing, joyful.)

RADIO MAN: All right folks! You got our number! So give us a call, y'all!

MUSIC NO. 29: INCIDENTALS

NARRATOR: As the lights shift, we are in another area, away from the crowd, where BOBBIE JO paces nervously.

SCROOGE: Will you look at Cratchit! Pacing like a nervous filly.

DWIGHT: Hey, Bobbie Jo, you're next! Go get 'em girl!

BOBBIE JO: Dwight. I can't do this. I can't sing on the radio. I can't.

DWIGHT: Sure you can, honey!

BOBBIE JO: What if I forget the words?

DWIGHT: You know the words, Bobbie Jo. Just concentrate on your delivery.

SCROOGE: Tell her to just sing to the kids!

DWIGHT: Just sing to the kids.

SCROOGE: And for Pete's sakes —

SCROOGE and DWIGHT: Quit pacin'!

BOBBIE JO: Stand still, y'mean?

DWIGHT: Just sing from the heart. Tell 'em how much you love 'em.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: You can do that, can't ya?

SCROOGE: I believe I can. *[BOBBIE JO kisses DWIGHT on the cheek]*

RADIO MAN: Okay folks, we're back. Just in time to greet our special bonus contestant. Say hello to Bobbie Jo! Bobbie Jo Cratchit!

ENSEMBLE: [Applauds]

BOBBIE JO: Hi, y'all. Oh, I am so nervous! Would y'all mind if my kids joined me up here?

ENSEMBLE: [Laughs and applauds]

BOBBIE JO: Thanks! Come on, kids. *(TIM and JANE join her.)* I was feelin' pretty sorry for myself when I walked in here tonight. Before I got on that train! But now... it's not that I forgot my troubles so much, it's that I'm remembering my blessings. This really is the healing time of year, isn't it? And on this night — this holy night — we gotta remember that no matter how rough the goin', long as we do our part, Someone's gonna take care of the rest.

MUSIC NO. 30: GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE

GOD FEED US WHEN WE'RE HUNGRY. GOD WARM US WHEN WE'RE COLD.
GOD WATCH US AS WE'RE GROWING. GOD AID US WHEN WE'RE OLD.
GOD GUIDE US THROUGH THE DARKNESS. GOD LEAD US TO THE SUN.
GOD BLESS US. GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE.

BOBBIE JO, JANE, and TIM: GOD CALM US WHEN WE'RE FRIGHTENED.
GOD LIFT US WHEN WE'RE DOWN.

GOD KEEP US IN THE COUNTRY. GOD HELP US IN THE TOWN.
GOD RAISE US WHEN WE STUMBLE. GOD SPEED US WHEN WE RUN.
GOD BLESS US. GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE.

BOBBIE JO and ENSEMBLE: AND MAKE THAT CHRISTMAS STAR SHINE EXTRA BRIGHT,
SO ALL THE LOST AND LONELY FIND THEIR WAY BACK HOME TONIGHT.

ALL: GOD SEE US WHEN WE'RE KNEELING. GOD HEAR US WHEN WE PRAY.

BOBBIE JO: GOD WORK US WHEN WE'RE FAITHFUL.

ALL: GOD FIND US WHEN WE STRAY. GOD ARM US IN OUR BATTLES.
GOD REST US WHEN THEY'RE DONE. GOD BLESS US. GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE.

NARRATOR: The MIDNIGHT bells began to toll and suddenly, SCROOGE found himself completely alone.

MUSIC NO. 31: CHRISTMAS YET TO COME

SCROOGE: Spirit! This is so wonderful! You know, maybe Cratchit should have won that contest! Then again, Dwight was mighty good, don't 'ya think? Spirit? Uh-oh ... that bell is tolling again. I think the party's over, Cinderella.

CHARLEY [acting temporarily as Narrator]: And when the bell tolled One, poor Scrooge was confronted with a terrifyin' sight. The frightening figure of ... the SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME.

SCROOGE: *[pause. SPIRIT enters silently.]* You are the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come? ... We're gonna visit the future me, right? The new improved model? ... You ain't gonna be very scintillating conversation, are you? *[SPIRIT beckons]* All right. I'm coming. But, before you show me what you're gonna show me, I just want you to know that... that I understand now. You know? ... I had a feeling you'd say that. *[SPIRIT beckons forcefully]* All right, all right. I'm coming. Let's see what's brewin' in your crystal ball.

[DORIS and LINDA LEE enter. The TOWN SQUARE]

LINDA LEE: Season's greetings, Doris!

DORIS: A very merry to you, Linda Lee! I take it you've heard the glad tidings?

LINDA LEE: What? Oh! Yes. I thought he was never gonna die.

DORIS: Who dy'a think he left all the money to? His kin?

LINDA LEE: Please. He'd have it buried with him before he'd do anything decent like that.

DORIS: Well, he sure didn't do the real decent thing and leave it all to me! *(exit, laughing)*

CHARLEY *[entering]*: Well, old Scratch finally got his due.

VIRGIL: It's likely to be a very cheap funeral.

CHARLEY: Funeral? I don't think anyone's planning a funeral.

DWIGHT: [*entering stumbling and drunk*] Hey, fellas! How 'bout some Christmas cheer?!

VIRGIL: Lord knows that fool isn't. [*CHARLEY, VIRGIL exit*]

DWIGHT: Hey, y'all! Wait . . . please . . .

SCROOGE: Dwight. Oh, Dwight, what's happened to you? [*DWIGHT falls*] Son! [*DWIGHT exits*]
I don't like the tone of this. What's wrong with Dwight? And just where am I in this picture?
... What are you pointing at? ... The Hotel?

SCENE 4: The Marley Hotel Lobby

LAVINIA: [*on the desk phone, very somber*]: I'm all right now, Preacher, I'm all right. It's all just a little overwhelming, you know? Yes. Thank you. Merry Christmas to you, too. 'Bye now. Virgil!
Mr. Scrooge is checking out.

MUSIC NO. 32: GOODBYE, OLD DOG

IT'S SAD WHEN A GOOD MAN DIES, IT REALLY IS A CRIME.
IT'S SAD, SO SAD, WHEN A GOOD MAN DIES... BUT THAT AIN'T THE CASE THIS TIME!
GOODBYE, OLD DOG, I AIN'T YOUR RABBIT NOW.
GOODBYE, OLD DOG, YOU BARKED YOUR LAST BOW WOW.
FOR YEARS YOU KEPT ME IN THE HOLE. I COULDN'T ROCK, I COULDN'T ROLL.
WHO'S IN THE HOLE NOW? GOODBYE, OLD DOG.
GOODBYE, OLD DOG, THE BARNYARD FOLKS ARE FREE.
GOODBYE, OLD DOG, IT'S A DAY OF JUBILEE.
THE BIRDS ALL CHEER, THE RABBITS RAVE, THE CATS ARE DANCIN' ON YOUR GRAVE.
HOPE IT DON'T WAKE YOU! GOODBYE, OLD DOG.

NARRATOR: VIRGIL and the OTHERS, emerging from Scrooge's rooms with all of Scrooge's personal items, ran gleefully down the stairs.

LAVINIA: That's right. Clear it all out. I want those rooms nice and tidy. Make it all the easier to find that old coot's loot!

ENSEMBLE and LAVINIA: GOODBYE, OLD DOG,

LAVINIA: THEY'RE CARTIN' YOU AWAY.

ENSEMBLE and LAVINIA: GOODBYE, OLD DOG,

LAVINIA: IT'S DEAD DOG MOVIN' DAY!
THE GROUNDHOG'S UP FROM UNDERGROUND. THE OLD RED ROOSTER'S STRUTTIN' 'ROUND.

ENSEMBLE: AH! BUCK, BUCKA, BUCKA, BUCKA, BUCK!

ALL: SHOUT HALLELUJAH!

LAVINIA: GOODBYE, OLD DOG!

ALL: GOODBYE, OLD DOG, I GUESS YOU LOST THIS FIGHT. GOODBYE, OLD DOG,
WE'RE NOT GONNA MISS YOUR BITE.

SOLOIST: YOU BIT THE MEEK, YOU BIT THE JUST. AND NOW, AT LAST, YOU BIT THE DUST.

ALL: WILL THAT BE ALL, SIR? GOODBYE, OLD DOG!

LAVINIA: IT'S TIME TO DIG UP ALL THE STONES. LET'S FIND OUT WHERE YOU HID THEM BONES!

ALL: CAN'T TAKE 'EM WITH YOU! GOODBYE, OLD DOG!

LAVINIA: FORGIVE ME IF I SEEM TO GROWL, TONIGHT WILL BE MY NIGHT TO HOWL —

ALL: [HOWLS / YODELS] GOODBYE, OLD DOG! GOODBYE, OLD DOG!

[ALL exit except SCROOGE and SPIRIT]

SCROOGE: All right, big joke! The laugh's on me! I get it, Spirit. I get it. I see that nobody's all that torn up over my— over these developments. *(pause)* But is that really it? Doesn't anyone have any feeling of sadness? At all? Does no one feel a loss?

SCENE 5: A CEMETERY

MUSIC NO. 33: ANGEL BESIDE ME - REPRISE

NARRATOR: Suddenly Scrooge found himself in a Cemetery.

BOBBIE JO: Hey, Tim. It's Mama . . . Well, it's Christmas again, honey. Another cold one. And another one without you, baby. 'Course I'm missing you something awful. Jane won't be around this year again either. Still livin' in that city. I can't imagine, but there ya are. I got a letter from her though, yesterday. She wrote the oddest thing. She said "Tim was right. Cranberry, cranberry, cranberry, popcorn." I suppose you know what she means. You kids . . . Tim, lately, I've been thinking about our family, and how I wasn't home a lot of the time. How I wanted to do more for you, but I couldn't and how you understood, Tim. You understood so much for a little guy, and I thank you for that. You were a good boy. Everybody said so. 'Course they never saw you when you were a little devil, and that you could be, sir. Times when you sassed me till I'd see red. And you'd tease your sister and she'd get mad and she'd be the one that got punished. You know, sometimes I can still see you and your sister on the living room floor as if it was yesterday and it's all I can do not to reach out and —

I HEAR YOUR VOICE, AND YOU'RE HERE WITH ME. JUST A LITTLE MAKE BELIEVE...

Gotta get back to work, honey. Truck drivers need their Christmas dinner. I love you, Tim. I know you're not that far away.

THERE'S AN ANGEL BESIDE ME, HOLDIN' MY HAND. I'VE GOT AN ANGEL
BESIDE ME HELPIN' ME STAND. THOUGH THE PATH MAY BE STEEP,

AND THE MOUNTAIN SO TALL, THERE'S AN ANGEL BESIDE ME ...

Oh, baby. Oh, my Tim! *[exits]*

SCROOGE: That boy gave me ... a Christmas card. ... Spirit. Please. Let me change the story. Let me make a difference in their lives. I can do it.

NARRATOR: With that, the SPIRIT revealed a neglected GRAVESTONE. With Scrooge's name on it.

SCROOGE: Don't let this be my legacy! Let me know it's not too late. They need me! *(quietly:)* I need them. Please, Spirit. Give me back my family. I beg you. *[SPIRIT begins to exit]* Marley said this was a hope and a chance. I can give them the hope. You gotta give me the chance ! Please. I'll remember everything the Spirits revealed to me! Christmas shall live in me as long as I live! Let me know it's not too late! Not too late! Not too late ... not too late ... not too late ...

SCENE 6: MARLEY HOTEL LOBBY AND TOWN SQUARE

NARRATOR: In the Marley Hotel, Lavinia came into the lobby in her curlers and robe, startled to find Scrooge huddled on the staircase. and mumbling to himself.

LAVINIA: What in the world ...?

SCROOGE: Not too late... not too late. . . not too late....

LAVINIA: Mr. Scrooge! Wake up!

SCROOGE: *[opens his eyes, sees LAVINIA, decides:]* It's too late.

LAVINIA: Mr. Scrooge, what are ya doin'?

SCROOGE: Lavinia! Is this the real you?

LAVINIA: Now don't get fresh. They're just curlers.

SCROOGE: It is you! *[he embraces her]*

LAVINIA: What are you doin'?!

SCROOGE: Lavinia, it's not too late?

LAVINIA: No, it's too early! What are you doin' screamin' at the top of your lungs this time of the morning?

SCROOGE: Which morning? Quick! Which morning!?

LAVINIA: What do you think? Christmas morning!

SCROOGE: AHHHH! HA HA! They did it all in one night!

LAVINIA: What?

SCROOGE: The Spirits did it all in one night!

LAVINIA: Oh. The spirits did it, huh? How many bottles?

SCROOGE: It's my hope and my chance! My hope and my chance!

MUSIC NO. 34: FINALE

NARRATOR: And then, SCROOGE began to dance about!

SCROOGE: Oh, thank you, Marley! Thank you! And Granny, and Santa, and even that scary one. Thank you! Oh, Lavinia, I've been reprieved!

LAVINIA: Just settle down now. Virgil! Front desk, Virgil!

SCROOGE: Don't move! I'll be right back! *[exits]*

LAVINIA: Virgil! Mr. Scrooge is off his rocker! We gotta do somethin'!

VIRGIL: Like what?

LAVINIA: Go on up there! Lock him in his room!

VIRGIL: What?!

LAVINIA: Don't worry, I got this crowbar, and I'm right behind you! Go on!

NARRATOR: But suddenly SCROOGE appeared at the top of the stairs holding his STRONGBOX.

SCROOGE: *[singing]* "...MARLEY COUNTY CHRISTMAS!"

LAVINIA and VIRGIL: *[screaming]* AHHHHHH!!

SCROOGE: My nephew Dwight wrote that tune! You! What's your name again?

VIRGIL: Virgil.

SCROOGE: Virgil! How ya' doin', Virgil?

VIRGIL: Fine.

SCROOGE: Oh, he's fine! He's a fine boy! Ha! Ha! Now, Virgil: You go down to the Luncheonette, and book it for me. All day.

VIRGIL: Huh?

SCROOGE: Just tell 'em I'm pickin' up the tab on anyone and everyone's Christmas breakfast, lunch, or dinner. And Virgil: Tell 'em it's from Santa! You understand? Don't mention my name.

VIRGIL: Yessir, Mr. Scroo— Mr. Santa.

SCROOGE: Good boy! Intelligent boy!

VIRGIL: Oh, thank you, sir.

SCROOGE: Now go on! Here's some money. And Virgil? Keep the change!

VIRGIL: You heard him. I'm intelligent!! (*exits*)

SCROOGE: Lavinia!

LAVINIA: [*brandishing crowbar*] What?!

SCROOGE: If you're thinkin' of renovating this place, it's gonna take more than a crowbar! Now if you want to do the job right, you gotta be willin' to pay for it. Don't you want your hotel lookin' its best?

LAVINIA: MY hotel?

SCROOGE: Darlin', let me cut to the chase. Here's the deed – and here's the dough.

LAVINIA: What? You're givin' me this strongbox?

SCROOGE: This place is yours again. Lock, Stock, and Mistletoe Meatloaf.

LAVINIA: What?!

SCROOGE: And to cover those capital improvements, I expect you to raise my rent!

LAVINIA: Oh my Lord. It's a miracle.

SCROOGE: NOW, YOU MAY THINK THAT I FLIPPED MY LID, THAT I LOST MY MIND — WELL, OF COURSE, I DID! IF I HAD ANY SENSE, I'D'VE LOST MY SENSES MANY MOONS AGO. I SEARCHED MY SOUL AND I FOUND MY HEART, AND THE HOPE AND THE CHANCE AT A BRAND NEW START! SO SING THAT SONG — YOU KNOW, THAT PRETTY PART...

LAVINIA: "GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN..."?

SCROOGE: Yeah. That always gets me. Right here. (*to audience:*)
THE BOTTOM LINE IS THIS, MY FRIENDS — TEAR DOWN THE WALL AND MAKE AMENDS
AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE HEARTACHE ENDS, AND JUST LIKE THAT, THE SOUL ASCENDS.
AND JUST LIKE THAT, NEW LOVE EXTENDS, IN JUST THE WAY THE LORD INTENDS.
SO SPREAD THOSE HAPPY DIVIDENDS — AND THE JOY OF THE SEASON JUST NEVER ENDS!

God bless ya, Lavinia! Merry Christmas!

NARRATOR: And with that, SCROOGE ran out of the HOTEL and into the TOWN SQUARE,

alive with the activity of Christmas morning.

SCROOGE [*seeing BOBBIE JO, TIM, and JANE, SCROOGE assumes a nasty persona*]: Cratchit!

BOBBIE JO: Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE : Cratchit. I just want you to know that I heard that party all last night and I must say, it sounded like y'all were havin' yourselves a high old time!

BOBBIE JO: We did have us a high old time. Raised a lot of money, too. What of it?

SCROOGE: I'll tell you what of it! How would you like it if I started caterwauling in public like that?

BOBBIE JO: In all honesty? I'd probably bust a gut.

SCROOGE: Then prepare to laugh all the way to the bank, lady.

BOBBIE JO: Beg pardon?

SCROOGE: Cratchit...

FORGIVE AN OLD MAN'S BLINDNESS. HE'S THAWED HIS FROZEN HEART.
AND THOUGH HE'S NEW TO KINDNESS HE'D LIKE TO MAKE A START.

BOBBIE JO: Mr. Scrooge?

SCROOGE: Mrs. Cratchit. Would you consider returning to the Marley Savings and Loan, in a position worthy of you? Say, Chief Officer for the Farmer's Relief Fund?

BOBBIE JO: Mr. Scrooge

SCROOGE: Whatever I can do to help you and your fine family, I'm gonna do it. Count on that, Bobbie Jo.

BOBBIE JO: I'm a little amazed here. [*DWIGHT runs on but doesn't see SCROOGE*]

DWIGHT: Hey, y'all! Everything's on the house at the luncheonette! (*sees Scrooge*) Oh! Uh...

SCROOGE: Dwight. Nephew.

THE PROMISE I HAD BROKEN I HEREBY NOW RENEW. THE WORDS I'VE NEVER SPOKEN,
I'M GONNA SAY TO YOU. OUR FAMILY REUNION IS WAY PAST OVERDUE.

You probably have plans and all, Dwight. But tell me...

Would you be interested in spending today with your uncle?

DWIGHT: What do you think? [*DWIGHT & SCROOGE embrace*]

JANE: That's most harmonious of you, sir!

SCROOGE: Thank you kindly, Miss Cratchit. How 'bout you, Tim? Think we can be pals?

TIM: Why, sure. But you gotta promise not to be so sad anymore.

SCROOGE: I promise!

NARRATOR: Scrooge took the old red SCARF from his neck, and wrapped it around TIM's neck.

SCROOGE: Merry Christmas, son.

TIM: Thank you, sir. *(a moment's pause)* Hey ---- it's snowin'!

CHARLEY: *[to audience]* ... What did I tell you about that miracle?

SCROOGE: Boy, how 'bout you and I go sleddin'?

TIM: Yessir!

NARRATOR: SCROOGE swooped TIM up in his arms and hugged the child close to his heart.

ALL: GOD GUIDE US THROUGH THE DARKNESS. GOD LEAD US TO THE SUN.

GOD BLESS US. GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE.

CHARLEY: And that, my friends, is the end of our story.

MUSIC NO. 35: BOWS

MUSIC NO. 36: EXIT MUSIC