

Actor 2
Marley

(Sound Effect: FLASH of thunder and lightning)

(A ghostly **FIGURE BURSTS** out.)

(Sound Effect: Shrieking banshees!!!)

(**SCROOGE** shrieks. Rolls across the floor. Still clutching his candle.)

Music: "SUICIDE GHOST" – 'SIXTH SENSE' soundtrack*]

SCROOGE. Get back sir! Get back I tell thee!! Who are you sir? Who are you? Who are you sir!?

(Sound Effect: FLASH of thunder and lightening)

(The **FIGURE** transforms into **MARLEY'S GHOST**.)

(Music: Continues over)

MARLEY. 'Tis I **EBENEZER!!!** Jacob Marley!! Returned from the grave sir!!!

SCROOGE. (transfixed) **MARLEY!!??** Marley!!??? Returned from the – No no no sir! You are – ha ha ha! Not he sir! You are – as door as a deadnail. As dale as a doorned. As ned as a nob-dod. I mean – you are – you are – (steadying himself) – an infection of the mind sir. Is what you are sir! Caused by a crumb of cheese, a fragment of underdone potato, an undigested piece of roast beef. Grave sir!? There is more of gravy than of grave about you sir! You are not he sir! (He laughs loudly.) Ha ha ha ha ha!!!

MARLEY. Then I shall prove it to thee that I am sir. Remember mine face sir? A face like ancient parchment it was said sir.

(The **GHOST** reveals his face. He might undo the traditional **MARLEY** bandage. He might pull a mask off. Whatever he does, he shrieks into **SCROOGE's** face.)

AGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

SCROOGE. AGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

*Please see Music Use Note, p. 3

(SCROOGE *ricochets across the stage. Staggers to his feet.*)

SCROOGE. No no no no sir!!! You will not frighten me sir with all your ghosty tricks sir! I am very sorry if thou art decomposing but it is hardly my problem. Put a brave face on it sir! (*He laughs.*) Don't go to pieces! (*laughs again*) Ha ha ha!

MARLEY. (*unmoved*) True. It is not your problem. Yet. But soon it will be. For you bear the same fetters as I.

SCROOGE. Fetters? What fetters?

MARLEY. These fetters.

(MARLEY *stumbles as if dragging a great weight.*)

(*Sound Effect: Chains*)

SPIRITS. (*wails and moans*)

SCROOGE. Lo! What is this thou wearest? A great – (*gasps*)
CHAIN!!! Clasped about thy ghostly middle made of –

(*The ACTORS offstage make metal clanking noises and intone.*)

ACTORS. – cash boxes –

SCROOGE. – cash boxes!

ACTORS. – heavy keys –

SCROOGE. – heavy keys!

ACTORS. – padlocks and bolts –

SCROOGE. – padlocks and bolts!

ACTORS. – deed boxes wrought in heavy steel!

SCROOGE. – deed boxes wrought in heavy steel!

MARLEY. 'Tis the chain I forged in life Ebenezer. And attached to it, all the dreadful accoutrements of my trade! *OUR* trade Ebenezer! Of my own free will did I wear it. As do you sir.

SCROOGE. Me sir! I have no chain sir! Ha ha! (*A jaunty little twirl.*) I am chain-free sir!

MARLEY. Only at the end wilt thou seest it.

SCROOGE. End? What end?

MARLEY. Thine end sir! Only then wilt thou see that which – I dost – (*confused*) – see.

SCROOGE. And what is thou dost doest – (*confused too*) see sir...precisely?

MARLEY. That thou art eternally and irrevocably trapped! As I am!

SCROOGE. Eternally trapped?

MARLEY. (*pedantically*) Eternally and irrevocably trapped! (*Comes close. SCROOGE flinches at the smell.*) Shall I tell thee why?

SCROOGE. I'd rather you didn't actually.

MARLEY. Because, dear Ebenezer, in the whole of our miserable lives, never once did we help a single solitary human soul without some profit attached to it!

SCROOGE. So?

MARLEY. SO? SO?!?? That is not why we are here sir! Upon the earth sir! That is not our sacred purpose sir! To gain. To profit. To make *MONEY* sir!

SCROOGE. (*laughs*) I believe it is sir.

MARLEY. *NO SIR! NO EBENEZER! To help others! That is our purpose sir! That is our sacred duty sir! And now that I SEE that, I cannot fulfill it! I am powerless sir! I can help no one! (sobs) I cannot touch them! I cannot reach them! They cannot even SEE me! Old friend, I am come this night to save thee from the same fate.*

(*SCROOGE listens for a moment, then laughs in his face.*)

SCROOGE. *Humbug sir! My sacred duty is to myself sir! Help others!? Ha!!! Our only duty upon this earth is to survive Jacob. In whatever way we can. We have no other purpose sir!*

MARLEY. (*sobbing*) *NOOOOOOOO!!!!*

SCROOGE. Jacob! Pull yourself together man! (*laughs*) Sorry probably a little late for that now. Listen Marley! Your fate is your fate. And my fate is mine.

And I have nothing to be *SAVED* from thank you! So kindly leave me to the rest of my days. That I shall live out as I see fit. Thank you sir for your concern sir! –

(Runs to the window, flings it open. A wild wind blows in.)

(Sound Effect: Wind sounds)

SCROOGE. – but now OUT if you would please! *(tries to waft him out of the window)* Out sir out!! Whoosh! Whoosh! Away away sir!!

MARLEY. It is already decided sir.

SCROOGE. *(stops wafting)* What is?

MARLEY. Three ghosts will visit you. This very night.

SCROOGE. *Ghosts? WHAT GHOSTS!!?* From where sir?

MARLEY. From – from – *(not actually sure)* – where – ghosts come from. They have already taken flight sir.

SCROOGE. *Taken flight!!?* Send them back sir!

MARLEY. I cannot sir. The first cometh at the last stroke of twelve. The second, at the third stroke of three expect. And the third at the second cock crow that doth herald forth the dawn.

SCROOGE. What?

MARLEY. *(sighs)* The first cometh at the first – last stroke of twelve. The second on the last – first *(confused)* – third stroke of three expect. And the third – heard upon the second – um – cock-crow that doth herald forth – doth forth – *(totally lost)* – the first – fourth – second – fourth of dawn. Got that?

SCROOGE. *What!?* NO!!!

MARLEY. Now I must leave thee sir!

(MARLEY wraps his head again, or puts his mask on.)

SCROOGE. Wait! Wait Jacob!

MARLEY. Thimmm hmmm armmm hhmmm eeezzzmm!

SCROOGE. *WHAT!!?*

Int. Scrooge & Isabella's Home. Christmas Eve.

(YOUNG SCROOGE marches on. He has grown grander.
More stooped.)

YOUNG SCROOGE. Isabella? What is it?

ISABELLA. Ebenezer?

YOUNG SCROOGE. What?

ISABELLA. I have something for thee sir.

YOUNG SCROOGE. What?

(She holds out her hand. A flash of diamond.)

SCROOGE. Not this scene spirit. Not this Christmas!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. I am afraid it must be borne
sir.

YOUNG SCROOGE. Your ring.

(She drops it in his hand. SCROOGE watches, frozen.)

ISABELLA. It was my blessing, sir. But now I return it.
(closes his hand over the ring) I fear you have another
'engagement' sir. That consumes your heart. Another
passion sir.

YOUNG SCROOGE. Passion? What passion?

ISABELLA. All your gain sir! Your profits! Locking them
up in your box every night of your life! That is your
passion! Not *me* Ebenezer! I am not your passion! I
am not your love! Where were you tonight?

YOUNG SCROOGE. Working!

ISABELLA. It is Christmas Eve!

YOUNG SCROOGE/OLD SCROOGE. So!!!??

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. She cannot hear thee sir.

ISABELLA. 'Tis the day we met! The day you proposed!

(Music: CAROL SINGERS in distance: "GOD REST
YOU MERRY GENTLEMEN")

YOUNG SCROOGE. What time have I for Christmas! I have
to work! I have my customers to see to! My books to
be balanced! I do it for us Belle!

ISABELLA. We were one beating heart Ebenezer. One. And full of joy. But now we are two and full of misery. How often and how keenly I have thought of this through the lonely hours of night I will not say to you. It is enough that I *have* thought of it and do think of it, and now – release you.

YOUNG SCROOGE. Release me!? You cannot release me!

ISABELLA. So leave your counting and your ledgers and your figures and your books and your *MONEY!* And come with me. For ever. With nothing! Just us!

(YOUNG SCROOGE stares at her. An agony of indecision.)

You cannot, can you?

(Still YOUNG SCROOGE says nothing. SCROOGE watches spellbound.)

Ebenezer?

(still nothing.)

It is said if a man follows not the true calling of his soul, his soul will turn black and bad. It will wither and die. I hope you are following your soul's true calling Ebenezer. And that your soul doth thrive. May you be happy in the life you choose sir.

(ISABELLA turns and leaves. Both SCROOGES watch her go.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You did not stop her sir.

SCROOGE. For what purpose?

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. You had her heart sir!

SCROOGE. A distraction merely. A moment's weakness! A man must make his own way. He cannot afford such aberrations! She was a narrow escape if you want to know! That's all she was! *(He laughs.)* These – 'visions' do not touch me spirit!

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Just one more if you would sir. Then I am done sir.

SCROOGE. *I am done with thee spirit!*