

SCENE THREE

(Scrooge makes his way to his front door where he stops to get his key out and in the knocker is seen Marley's face.)

MARLEY'S GHOST

Scrooooooge... (Marley's face disappears.)

SCROOGE

Marley? ...Bah, Humbug!

(Scrooge enters his house as the bedroom (chair, fireplace, and bed) is brought on by the company. Scrooge walks up the fireplace and hangs his coat. He checks around his room to make sure all is as it's should be. He takes his gruel from a top the fireplace and sits down to eat in his chair.)

MARLEY'S GHOST

Scrooge.... (A light highlights the painting of Marley above the fireplace. Scrooge looks at the painting but it is unchanged.)

SCROOGE

Marley?... (He puts on his sleeping robe.)

(A swinging bell which hangs off the fireplace wall begins to ring. Softly then loudly with every other bell in the house as well. They all stop at once.)

SCROOGE

Humbug! (He gets his nightcap and gets into bed.)

MARLEY'S GHOST

(Marley appears in the painting) Scrooooooge!

SCROOGE

(Scrooge gets out of bed but doesn't see Marley in the painting.) It's humbug still! I won't believe it! (He defiantly goes back to bed.)

MARLEY'S GHOST

(appearing in the painting with bells) Scrooooooooooooooge!!!

(Scrooge gets out of bed and see Marley's Ghost in the painting briefly. It vanishes. He goes to get a closer look and the fireplace comes to life. Scrooge grabs the poker and the fire travels through grates in the floor all over his bedroom. Finally Marley's Ghost is actually in the room with Scrooge.)

SCROOGE

How now! What do you want with me?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Much!

SCROOGE

Who are you?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Ask me who I **was**.

SCROOGE

Who **were** you then. You're very particular for a ghost.

MARLEY'S GHOST

In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE

Can you -- can you sit down?

MARLEY'S GHOST

I can.

SCROOGE

Do it, then. (Marley's Ghost sits in Scrooge's chair.)

MARLEY'S GHOST

You don't believe in me?

SCROOGE

I don't.

MARLEY'S GHOST

What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?

SCROOGE

I don't know.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE

Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach perhaps. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are! Humbug, I tell you; humbug!

MARLEY'S GHOST

Ebenezer Scrooooooge!

(Marley's Ghost chases Scrooge to the bed. As Scrooge gets on the bed Marley's Ghost makes it spin wildly. The bed slowly stops.)

SCROOGE

Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Man of the worldly mind! Do you believe in me or not?

SCROOGE

I do, I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?

MARLEY'S GHOST

It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness! (Marley let's out a loud cry.)

SCROOGE

You are fettered. Tell me why?

MARLEY'S GHOST

I wear the chain I forged in life, I made it link by link, and yard by yard. Is its pattern strange to you?
Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!

SCROOGE

Jacob, Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me.

MARLEY'S GHOST

I have none to give. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house -- mark me! -- in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!

SCROOGE

You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Slow!

SCROOGE

Seven years dead. And travelling all the time?

MARLEY'S GHOST

The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

SCROOGE

But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings in need with my eyes turned down? (Thunder crash.) Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

SCROOGE

I will. But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob!

MARLEY'S GHOST

How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. That is no light part of my penance. I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

You were always a good friend to me. Thank'ee!

MARLEY'S GHOST

You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

SCROOGE

Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

MARLEY'S GHOST

It is.

SCROOGE

I -- I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY'S GHOST

Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one.

SCROOGE

Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

MARLEY'S GHOST

Expect the second when the bell tolls two and the third when the bell tolls three. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us.

(Marley's Ghost spins the bed again as he vanishes. The bed stops and Scrooge is alone.)

SCROOGE

Hum...Hum...(Unable to finish the word he falls asleep exhausted.)