

Scrooge gathers the group at the next station. The scene is set with a chair, possibly a screen for SCROOGE to change behind. And there is a door with a cut out for Marley to place his face as if he is the knocker.

SCROOGE

When I arrived home, having inserted my key in the lock, I saw in the door knocker, without undergoing any process of change, not a knocker, but Marley's face! (Scrooge steps back and Marley takes over the scene)

MARLEY

I had a dismal light about me. I was dead. There's no doubt about that. The undertaker, and chief mourner signed the burial register. Even Scrooge signed it. I was absolutely, undeniably dead. Now, I can't say I know exactly why a door-nail is particularly associated with death. Personally, I might have thought a coffin-nail was the "deadest" piece of metal around. But let's stick with the traditional saying - I was as dead as a door-nail. Scrooge knew this, of course. How could he not? We had been business partners for many years. Scrooge was my sole friend. He was even the only mourner at the funeral. Scrooge did not appear too broken up about it - he conducted business as usual on the day of the funeral and even managed to negotiate a good deal. I keep coming back to my death because it's crucial to understand this point for the story we are about to tell. Just as we need to believe Hamlet's father died before the play begins (otherwise, his nighttime stroll on the castle walls would be no more remarkable than any middle-aged man foolishly wandering around a windy place like St. Paul's Churchyard at night), we must be certain of my death for this tale to make sense. Scrooge never removed my name from the business. Years later, it still appeared above the warehouse door: "Scrooge and Marley." New clients sometimes called him by his own name, sometimes by my name, Marley - He answered to both. It made no difference to him. But oh, Scrooge was a miserly old man! He was tight-fisted, greedy, and grasping - a real penny-pincher! He was as hard and sharp as flint, never showing a spark of generosity. His cold personality seemed to physically affect him. Frost seemed to cover his head, eyebrows, and stubbly chin. He carried this cold with him everywhere, chilling his office even in the hottest summer days, and never warming up even at Christmas.

(Marley steps into the scene and begins rattling his chains and moaning Scrooge's name)

SCROOGE

Who goes there?!

MARLEY

It is I Jacob Marley!

SCROOGE

(Marley enters the scene) Humbug! I won't believe it. I know you; Marley's Ghost!

How now! What do you want with me?"

MARLEY

Much! In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley. You don't believe in me?

SCROOGE

I don't.

MARLEY

Why do you doubt your senses?

SCROOGE

Because, a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach. 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!

(At this Marley lets out a frightful cry, and shakes his chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge holds on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon.)

SCROOGE

Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

MARLEY

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

It is required of every man, that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellowmen, 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—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!

SCROOGE

You are fettered, tell me why?

MARLEY

I wear the chain I forged in life, I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I placed these chains upon my body of my own free will. And of my own free will I wore it. 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 labored on it since. It is a ponderous chain!

SCROOGE

Jacob, old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!

MARLEY

I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would do. 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

But tell me oh spirit! What do you want with me?

MARLEY

I am here tonight 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.

MARLEY

You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

SCROOGE

Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

MARLEY

It is.

SCROOGE

I—I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY

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

Expect the second spirit on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!

(Marley exits. Scrooge turns to the audience.)

SCROOGE

Upon Jacob's departure I followed to the window. The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost. And being, from the emotion I had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, I went straight to bed, and fell asleep.

Now, quickly, this way. We haven't a moment to spare.

(He gathers the audience and leads them to the next scene.)