***NAC Christmas Carol Audition Readings 2020***

**For The Narrator:**

Narrator: Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge’s name was good upon ’Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail. Mind! I don’t mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country’s done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail. Scrooge and he were partners for I don’t know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnized it with an undoubted bargain The mention of Marley’s funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate.

**For Scrooge:**

Scrooge: If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. It’s not my business. It’s enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people’s. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!”

Scrooge; Spirit! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope! Good Spirit, Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life! I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!”

Narrator: In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him. Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom’s hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

Scrooge: I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees!

**For Fred:**

Fred: “There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures  bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it

**For Bob:**

Bob: Yes, my dear. I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you’ll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child! My little child!(Cries) However and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or this first parting that there was among us?

All: Never, father! Never! Etc.

Bob: And I know. I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

All: No, never, father. Etc.

Bob: I am very happy. I am very happy to have you all!

**For Jacob Marley:**

Marley: I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on 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 laboured 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. A very little more is all permitted to me. 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!

(The Ghost set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.)

Scrooge: But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,

Marley: Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

**For The Ghost of Christmas Past:**

Scrooge: Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?

Ghost: I am!

Scrooge: Who, and what are you?

Past Ghost: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

Scrooge: Long Past?

Past Ghost: No. Your past.

Scrooge: What business from my past brings you here?

Past Ghost: Your welfare!

Scrooge: A night of unbroken rest would be more conducive to that end.

Past Ghost: Your reclamation, then. Take heed! Rise! and come with me!

Scrooge: I am a mortal and liable to fall.

Past Ghost: Bear but a touch of my hand there and you shall be upheld in more than this!

**For Belle:**

Belle: Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.

Scrooge: Have I ever sought release?

Belle: In words. No. Never.

Scrooge: In what, then?

Belle: In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us. Tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now?

Scrooge: You think not.

Belle: I would gladly think otherwise if I could. Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were. You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!”

**For The Ghost of Christmas Present:**

Present Ghost: Come in! Come in! and know me better, man!

Scrooge: Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”

Present Ghost: I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

Scrooge: No, no. Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.

Present Ghost: If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

**For Mrs. Cratchit:**

Mrs. Cratchit: What has ever got your precious father then? And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn’t as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour?

Martha: Here’s Martha, mother!

Mrs. Cratchit: Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!

Martha: We’d a deal of work to finish up last night and had to clear away this morning, mother!”

Mrs. Cratchit: Well! Never mind so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!

**For Scrooge's Niece:**

Fred: He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live! He believed it too!

Niece: More shame for him, Fred!

Fred: He’s a comical old fellow. That’s the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

Niece: I’m sure he is very rich, Fred. At least you always tell me so.

Fred: What of that, my dear! His wealth is of no use to him. He don’t do any good with it. He don’t make himself comfortable with it. He hasn’t the satisfaction of thinking— ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going to benefit US with it.”

Niece: I have no patience with him.