

'A Christmas Carol'. We regret to inform you that for the last several weeks our cast and crew have been rehearsing a different play; Arthur Miller's little known holiday play 'Wreath of a Salesman'. Shortly before this evening's performance the cast and crew was made aware of this marketing snafu. They have found a copy of Charles Dickens' classic novel backstage, as well as a bunch of Dickensian costumes used most recently in our children's production of Oliver and will indeed be presenting 'A Christmas Carol' this evening for you to the best of their ability. So sit back, relax and enjoy...A Christmas Carol...hopefully...

The lights go down. We hear Fred Astaire's 'Easter Bonnet'. A cast member dressed as a stage manager leans out from the wings or pops their head through a curtain and waves to the booth to "cut it". The music shifts to Bobby Pickett's 'Monster Mash'. The Stage manager waves again and the music shifts to some sort of classic Christmas carol sung by a choir. During this carol the cast brings out props and set pieces (two windows on wheels, a door in a frame on wheels, a handful of chairs, a costume rack full of costumes and a trunk full of props. A clock bell is heard clanging and two narrators appear on stage.

Narrator #1

Marley was dead.

Narrator #2

Wow.

Narrator #1

What?

Narrator #2

That was just very dramatic.

Narrator #1

Well, he was.

Narrator #2

No, I know. It's just a very dramatic way to start the show. "Marley Was Dead". No build up. No "Marley was very sick for a while...then he died". Just boom. Marley was dead.

Narrator #1

Turning back to narrate

Dead as a Doornail.

Narrator #2

Ok, now you're making fun of him?

Narrator #1

That's what Dickens wrote.

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Narrator #2

Sick burn.

Narrator #1

Why are you here?

Narrator #2

Oh, I have to play Bob Cratchit in the next scene.

Narrator #1

Can you let me finish the opening narration?

Narrator #2

Oh, yeah...sorry...

Narrator #2 leaves starts to leave

Narrator #1

Marley was dead. Dead as a doornail. He had been dead for seven years this very night...

Narrator #2

Wait...so you were super dramatic about him dying but he's been dead for, like, 7 years?

Narrator #1

I thought you were leaving.

Narrator #2

Sorry

Narrator #1

Jacob Marley had been dead for seven years this very night. Not a single person came to his funeral other than his business partner and only friend, Ebenezer Scrooge.

Narrator #2

Business partner? What was their business?

Narrator #1

It's was called 'Scrooge & Marley'.

Narrator #2

I figured that, but what did they do?

Narrator #1

Business things.

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Narrator #2

What kind of business things?

Narrator #1

I...don't...know...normal business things. Lending money and such.

Narrator #2

That seems really vague. Were they a bank?

Narrator #1

Well...not really...

Narrator #2

What were they then?

Narrator #1

Would you just trust me and get off the stage?

Narrator #2

Ok, sorry.

Narrator #2 leaves

Narrator #1

Our story begins seven years to the day Marley died, on Christmas Eve at the firm of Scrooge & Marley. Ebenezer Scrooge kept the name of his business long after Marley died, as a reminder of his old friend. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names: it was all the same to him. We open on Scrooge and his sole employee, Bob Cratchit, shortly before closing, as the clock chimes three.

No chime is heard.

As the clock chimes three...ahem...

One of the actors notices the clock hasn't chimed so makes the clock chiming noise three times. The actors scramble to assemble a set moving the windows and door into place around Scrooge & Bob Cratchit.

Scrooge

Counting coins

One hundred forty two, one hundred forty three...

Cratchit

It's only a few hours to closing time sir