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A CHRISTMAS CAROL EN LA FRONTERA: PRODUCING BILINGUAL WORK DURING QUARANTINE

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A Christmas Carol en La Frontera: Producing Bilingual Work During Quarantine

Synopsis:

An interactive presentation of the process of writing, directing, and re-writing (for radio) the classic, A Christmas Carol, for a frontera audience. A Christmas Carol en La Frontera had its premier in 2018 at UT-El Paso and had a deep impact on audience members from both sides of the frontera, especially school audiences. COVID-19 further spurred the reimagining of this show; it shifted from the stage to the radio. Samples from the text, video clips, and photos will further the conversation.

*A CHRISTMAS CAROL,
EN LA FRONTERA*

Based on 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens
Adapted by Jay Stratton and Adriana Domínguez

Cast List

PRINCIPALS

- Ebenezer Scrooge: *No Doublecast.* Older, male, Mexican but lives in the north and never goes south. Spanish first language but speaks perfect English.
- Undertaker: *Also plays Businessman, Sherriff, and Percy.* Male or female. American narrative voice. English first language but bilingual.
- Sepulturero: *Also plays Businessman, Mayor, and Jorge.* Male or female. Mexican narrative voice. Spanish first language but bilingual.
- Roberto Cratchit: *No Doublecast.* Scrooge's clerk. Medium aged male, Mexican, bilingual but much stronger in Spanish.
- Federico: *No Doublecast.* Scrooge's nephew. Young male, Mexican but lives in the north, perfectly bilingual.
- Marley: *No Doublecast.* Jacob Marley – both as a ghost and as a living being in flashback. American businessman, speaks only English.
- Mother Superior: *May Doublecast in Act II.* The Ghost of Christmas Past. A Mexican nun and teacher. Bilingual.
- Don Peluche: *Also plays Christmas Present.* A bombastic older Mexican businessman. Bilingual.
- Señora Peluche: *May Doublecast in Act II.* Middle Aged Mexican woman. Spanish speaking.
- Young Scrooge: *May Doublecast in Act II.* Scrooge ages 16-23. Bilingual.
- Bella: *Also plays Rose.* Young Mexican woman. Bilingual but stronger in Spanish.
- Christmas Present: *Also plays Don Peluche.* The Falstaffian spirit of Christmas. Mexican male, but really a spirit. Bilingual but mostly speaks English.
- Mrs. Cratchit: *May Doublecast in Act II.* Roberto Cratchit's wife. Adult Mexican woman. Spanish speaking but strongly bilingual.
- Marta Cratchit: *May Doublecast in Act II.* The eldest Cratchit child. Late teenage or early 20s Mexican young woman. Spanish speaking but strongly bilingual.
- Catherine: Young American woman. Wife of Federico. Mostly English speaking.

Jorge: *Also plays Sepulturero.* Young Mexican man. Husband of Rose. Bilingual.

Rose: *Also plays Bella.* Young Mexican Woman. Wife of Jorge. Mostly Spanish speaking.

Percy: *Also plays Undertaker.* Young American man. Bilingual.

Ghost of Future: This character does not speak and may be created to fit the aesthetic of a particular production. In the original production it was three simple puppets of a large skull and two skeletal hands upstage of a scrim.

ADULT ENSEMBLE

Husband, Wife, Ricardo, Maria, Mayor, Sheriff, Piñatero, Carnicero, Vendedor de Velas, Ghost Dancers

YOUTH ENSEMBLE

Little Girl, Boy Scrooge, Esperanza, Pedro Cratchit, Belinda Cratchit, Luisa Cratchit, Tiny Tim Cratchit, Ignorance, Want, Esteban

ACT I
Prologue
The Graveyard

Cemetery. Enter Scrooge and a funeral procession to bury Marley. Ghost Dance. When the ceremony is over the two undertakers move downstage.

UNDERTAKER

Jacob Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.

SEPULTURERO

No doubt. Estaba Muerto.

UNDERTAKER

This must be clearly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story we are about to tell.

SEPULTURERO

Estaba más muerto que el Mar Muerto. Dead as a doornail.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge knew Marley was dead?

SEPULTURERO

Of course! Scrooge fue el único de luto en el funeral. His only mourner.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge and Marley were business partners for... I don't remember how many years.

SEPULTURERO

Muchos años.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge never painted out Marley's name on the door to their business. There it stood, seven years after Marley's death. Sometimes people called Scrooge Scrooge and sometimes Marley.

SEPULTURERO

He answered to both names por dinero. Siempre por dinero. To Scrooge, no había diferencia.

During the above, Scrooge has left the cemetery and is making his way to his office. He is stopped by a little girl.

LITTLE GIRL

Por favor, señor.

SCROOGE

Bah!!!

Scrooge threatens girl and she runs.

UNDERTAKER

He was the tightfisted hand at the grindstone.

SEPULTURERO

Era un usurero codicioso que estrujaba, apresaba, y arrebatava.

UNDERTAKER

No warmth could warm him, no cold could chill him. And people called him "Old Turncoat."

SEPULTURERO

"Viejo Vendido."

SCROOGE

Eh?!?

SEPULTURERO (sotto voce)

Pero nunca a su cara! Never to his face!

UNDERTAKER

Right! Shhhh... Scrooge liked to work his way along the edges of life warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

Scrooge has entered his counting house and is seating himself to work.

UNDERTAKER

Once upon a time ...

SEPULTURERO

Of all days in the year, en Nochebuena...

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge sat busy in his counting house.

SEPULTURERO

It was tarde en el dia. The sun - sinking over the desert...

UNDERTAKER

But even late on Christmas Eve, old Scrooge was hard at work.

Scene 1
The Counting House

Scrooge is seated at this desk. A young couple is standing alongside.

SCROOGE

6... 7... and three is... ten... Very well, Mr. Galicia. That covers your first month's rent.

HUSBAND

Sí.

SCROOGE

However, as you have no worthwhile references, there is the matter of your security deposit.

WIFE

¿Qué está diciendo?

HUSBAND

No estoy seguro.

SCROOGE

Security deposit! Depósito. De. Seguridad.

HUSBAND

Ah! Sí, sí!

SCROOGE

I can ill afford the risk of renting to... disreputables, can I?

HUSBAND

No entiendo "disreputables".

SCROOGE

You are a risk sir! (explaining in frustration) Usted es un riesgo! Entiende?

HUSBAND

Sí.

The doorbell jangles. Cratchit enters.

SCROOGE

Ah, Cratchit! Wait right where you are! (back to Husband) In addition to the rent, for you to move in, I must have twenty dollars of security. Veinte dolares para depósito de seguridad.

WIFE(to Husband)

Veinte dólares?!?

HUSBAND

Por favor, es Nochebuena señor.

SCROOGE

I am well aware of the date, sir, and you do yourself no credit to suggest that my good judgment would give way to some absurd holiday mania. Twenty additional dollars to move in, take it or leave it.

HUSBAND

Un momento, por favor.

Husband and Wife confer during the following.

SCROOGE

So, Cratchit, late as usual. Are the letters delivered?

ROBERTO

Sí señor... And here's your supper y el Periódico de la tarde.

SCROOGE

You've been gone thirty-seven minutes. I don't pay you to dawdle.

ROBERTO

Perdón, señor Scrooge. I do my best.

SCROOGE

Your best? Staring into shop windows or listening to carolers howling on every street corner?

HUSBAND (interrupting)

Señor?

SCROOGE

One moment Cratchit. (to Husband) Yes?

HUSBAND (handing Scrooge money)

Aquí está su dinero. Your money.

SCROOGE

So, you've come to your senses have you? Let's see. (he counts quickly) 18... 19... and 20. Very well then, Mr. Cratchit, please give these two the key to number 3 on Olivas and send them on their way.

ROBERTO

Número tres. Sí Señor.

The doorbell jangles. Undertaker and Sepulturero enter as businessmen as Roberto, Husband, and Wife get key etc.

ROBERTO

Good afternoon, señores.

UNDERTAKER

Good afternoon.

SEPULTURERO

Buenas tardes.

SCROOGE

Can I help you gentlemen?

UNDERTAKER

Have I the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Scrooge or Mr. Marley?

SCROOGE

Mr. Marley is dead. Died seven years ago, this very night.

UNDERTAKER

Ah.

SEPULTURERO

Mi más sentido pésame, señor.

Husband and Wife have their key and are exiting.

WIFE (to Scrooge)

Feliz Navidad, señor.

Awkward beat as Scrooge reacts.

ROBERTO (urgently guiding them out)

Feliz Navidad, mis amigos.

UNDERTAKER

Well... we have no doubt his generosity lives on in you Mr. Scrooge.

SEPULTURERO

En este tiempo sagrado, señor, we who are fortunate can do something for the poor and homeless who suffer with no shelter.

SCROOGE

Are there no prisons?

SEPULTURERO

Sí señor, many prisons.

SCROOGE

And the workhouses? Are they still in operation?

SEPULTURERO

Sí Señor?

SCROOGE

Good. I'm glad to hear it.

SEPULTURERO

But those places give no esperanza – no...

UNDERTAKER

...Christian cheer.

SEPULTURERO

Christian cheer! To mind or body...

UNDERTAKER

So a few of us are raising a fund to provide the poor some meat and drink and human comfort.

SEPULTURERO

Sí. And your firm has had buena fortuna.

UNDERTAKER

Yes, you have prospered!

SEPULTURERO

So... How much shall we put you down for?

SCROOGE

Nothing.

UNDERTAKER

You wish to remain anonymous? (To Sepulturero) Do you hear? (To Scrooge) What a thoughtful regalo! In the true spirit of-

SCROOGE (Interrupting)

I wish to be left alone! I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. If I have prospered, it is because I have worked hard and have not been foolish with my money. My taxes pay for the prisons and the workhouses. Those who are badly off must go there!

UNDERTAKER

Many can't go there.

SEPULTURERO

And many would rather die!

SCROOGE

If they would rather die, they had better do it and decrease the surplus population.

SEPULTURERO

Dios Mío!

SCROOGE

It is not my business, do you understand? It is enough for a man to understand his own business and not interfere in other people's. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

SEPULTURERO

Viejo Vendido!

SCROOGE

What's that?

UNDERTAKER (Restraining Sepulturero)

Nothing sir. (To Sepulturero) No vale la pena, mi amigo. (To Scrooge) We'll be on our way.

SCROOGE

What a prudent choice.

UNDERTAKER (To Roberto)

God bless you, young man.

SEPULTURERO (To Roberto)

Sí. Dios lo bendiga.

ROBERTO

Feliz Navidad, señores.

The doorbell jangles. Federico enters as Undertaker and Sepulturero exit.

FEDERICO (to the exiting Undertaker and SEPULTURERO)

Buenas tardes, Gentlemen.

Undertaker and Sepulturero shake their heads and hurry out the door.

FEDERICO (To Scrooge)

Merry Christmas, Tío!

SCROOGE

Ah! So you're back again this year, eh nephew?

FEDERICO

What can I say? I'm a creature of habit.

SCROOGE

A silly habit, I might add. What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

FEDERICO

Come come then, Tío. What right have you to be tan brusco? You're rich enough!

SCROOGE

Bah!

FEDERICO (to Roberto)

Merry Christmas, Roberto!

ROBERTO

Merry Christmas, señor Federico.

SCROOGE (mocking)

"Merry Christmas".

FEDERICO

Don't be cross, Tío.

SCROOGE

What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools? Merry Christmas! What's Christmas to you but a time for paying bills without money? A time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" or "Feliz Navidad" on his lips should be boiled in a bowl of caldo and buried with a sharpened stick of canela through his heart!

FEDERICO

Tío!

SCROOGE

He should! Keep Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine.

FEDERICO

Keep it? But you don't keep it!

SCROOGE

Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good has it ever done you!

FEDERICO

But Tío, I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time... A time when people are touched with sympathy and reach out a helping hand to the poor creatures below them. The only time I know of in the long calendar of the year when men and women open their hearts and look with compassion on their fellow travelers to the grave. And therefore, Tío, though Christmas has never put a dollar or a peso in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good and will do me good and I say "God Bless it!"

ROBERTO (applauding)

Ándale!

SCROOGE (to Roberto)

Let me hear another sound from you and you'll keep Christmas by losing your job. Then you'd have a Merry Christmas, eh? (to Federico) You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into politics.

FEDERICO

Don't be angry, Tío. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

SCROOGE

Us?

FEDERICO

Yes. Me, my wife, and a few good friends.

SCROOGE

Ah, yes, your wife. Tell me, nephew, why did you marry?

FEDERICO

Because I fell in love.

SCROOGE

Because you fell in love! The only thing in the world more ridiculous than a Merry Christmas. Good afternoon.

FEDERICO

You never came to see me before I got married. Why give that as a reason for not coming now?

SCROOGE

Good afternoon.

FEDERICO

I want nothing from you. I ask nothing of you. Somos familia. Why can't we be friends?

SCROOGE

Good afternoon!

FEDERICO

I am sorry to find you so resolute, but I am determined to keep my Christmas humor to the last... and so... a Merry Christmas, Tío!

SCROOGE

Good afternoon!!!

FEDERICO

And a Happy New Year! (exits)

SCROOGE

Humbug! (to Roberto) And you, Roberto... a clerk making four dollars a week with a wife and children to support talking about a Merry Christmas? I'll retire to a mad house.

ROBERTO

Lo siento. (Roberto approaches Scrooge's desk) Ummm... Señor Scrooge-.

SCROOGE

You'll want the whole day off tomorrow, I suppose.

ROBERTO

Si señor, if convenient.

SCROOGE

It isn't convenient and it isn't fair. But I suppose you must have it.

ROBERTO

Gracias señor... (awkward pause) Also... ummm...

SCROOGE

Yes? Are you loitering at my desk for some reason, Cratchit?

ROBERTO

Es Nochebuena, señor.

SCROOGE

So I am given to understand.

ROBERTO

My youngest son, Tiny Tim – we call him Pequeñito– he loves Nochebuena, señor. ¡Es su día favorito del año! But Tiny Tim, he does not feel well, though I say to mi esposa that he grows stronger, but she says-

SCROOGE

Cratchit, is it your plan to bore me to death?

ROBERTO

Señor?

SCROOGE

Are you going to stand here and elucidate for me the medical history of each member of your seemingly endless family tree or are you going to come to the point?

ROBERTO

Sí, señor. Lo siento, señor... So Pequeñito-

SCROOGE (slamming hand on desk)

Out with it, man!

ROBERTO

I wish to leave early quiero llevar a Tiny Tim a la posada... señor.

SCROOGE

'Leave Early?' Cratchit? And if I was to dock your wages for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, but you don't think me ill-used when I pay a full day's salary for only half a day's work!

ROBERTO

It is only once a year, señor.

SCROOGE

A poor excuse for picking my pocket every twenty-fourth of December. Well... Even in a full day, your work is of little value, I suppose. Be here all the earlier the next morning.

ROBERTO

Gracias jefe! Good night, jefe! (exiting) Feliz Navidad!

SCROOGE

Humbug!!!

SEPULTURERO

But Roberto did not hear this final word from his angry jefe. With a whoop (Roberto whoops) Roberto salió corriendo por la puerta...

UNDERTAKER

...dashed through the city streets, crowded with holiday shoppers...

Roberto does so, calling 'Feliz Navidad' to strangers as he goes.

SEPULTURERO

and across the bridge to la casa de su familia to celebrate Nochebuena.

Scene 2
The Ghost of Jacob Marley

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge, on the other hand, stayed late that Christmas Eve to read his newspaper and finish his lonely dinner. By the time he left, it was well after dark.

Scrooge leaves and is out on the street.

SEPULTURERO

Un viento helado had whipped up out of the desert. Una tormenta terrible.

UNDERTAKER

The dust blew so hard that Scrooge had to fumble his way forward with one hand over his eyes until he made it home.

Ghost dancers create wind and steal Scrooge's hat from his head.

SCROOGE

Blasted weather!

UNDERTAKER

Now it is a fact that there was nothing special about the door to Scrooge's townhouse.

SEPULTURERO

Sí. Puerta normal.

UNDERTAKER

So then, explain to me, if you can, how it happened that when Scrooge stepped forward to unlock his door, he saw not his door, but...

Marley's face appears on the door.

SCROOGE

Marley's face!!!

SEPULTURERO

Sí, la cara de Marley. Scrooge's old business partner.

UNDERTAKER

He looked just the same as the day he had died seven years ago.

SEPULTURERO

Igualito!

UNDERTAKER

Then as quickly as it had appeared, the face was gone.

Marley's face disappears.

SEPULTURERO

Scrooge no era un hombre que se asustara fácilmente.

UNDERTAKER

Indeed, he was not a man easily rattled, but the appearance of his long dead business partner shook him.

SEPULTURERO

Scrooge got to his feet, and examined la puerta.

UNDERTAKER

But finding nothing amiss...

SCROOGE

Bah.

SEPULTURERO

Entró.

Scrooge enters his house.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge lived in the same townhouse that his old business partner had lived in seven years before.

SEPULTURERO

Las paredes estaban vacías.

UNDERTAKER

The furniture was old and drab...

SEPULTURERO

Cubierto en polvo, but Scrooge didn't care. He had no amigos to come for a visit anyway.

UNDERTAKER

The wind outside was so sharp that it had crept through the walls, chilling Scrooge's melancholy home down to the floor.

Ghost dancers create cold.

SCROOGE

Bah! I like the cold. Cold is cheap.

SEPULTURERO

The wind sacudió sus ventanas...

UNDERTAKER

...and banged on his shutters, and at once...

SEPUTLTURERO

His vela was snuffed out!

Ghost dancers blow out Scrooge's candle.

SCROOGE

Eh? Very well, then, I like the dark. It's cheap too!

Scrooge fumbles about and relights his candle revealing Marley.

MARLEY

Ebenezer Scrooge!!!

SCROOGE

Aaaahhh!!! What do you want of me???

MARLEY

Much.

SCROOGE

Who are you?

MARLEY

Ask me who I was.

SCROOGE

Who WERE you then?

MARLEY

In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

SCROOGE

Jacob? No.

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 might be an undigested bit of barbacoa, a blot of salsa, some undercooked menudo, a crumb of tortilla. A ghost? Nonsense. Why, there's more that's chile than chilling about you! (Scrooge begins laughing at his own joke)

MARLEY (howling)

OOOOOOOOOaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!!!! Ebenezer Scrooge!!! In life did I not toil by your side amassing wealth without purpose? Do we not stand now in the baleful home I once called my own? Were you not the sole mourner at my graveside? Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me or not?

Scrooge has collapsed to his knees before Marley.

SCROOGE

I do, Jacob. I must! But why have you left your grave to appear before me?

MARLEY

It is required of every person that the spirit within him should walk among his fellow men showing them kindness. If that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. Because of my selfish life, I am doomed now to wander the earth and witness what I cannot share.

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, generosity, and benevolence all should have been my business!

SCROOGE

You are shackled, Jacob. Why?

MARLEY

I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link and yard by yard, each piece is a misdeed done or a good deed left undone. This one was the Hernandez family who we turned out into the desert. Do you remember?

SCROOGE

I think so.

MARLEY

This one was a woman I cursed for being slow on the bridge; this one was a harsh word I gave to a beggar boy across town when he should have had the coins in my pocket... And this one? This one was old Don Peluche.

SCROOGE

Don Peluche- Well, however it was made, your chain looks frightfully heavy.

MARLEY

Heavy? It is... heavy Ebenezer. Would you know the length and weight of the coil you bear yourself? It was as great as mine seven years ago, and you have labored on it since. Yours is a ponderous chain.

SCROOGE

Speak comfort to me Jacob!

MARLEY

I have none to give, Ebenezer. At this time of year, I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raised them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men? (the church bell chimes) My time is nearly at an end. Will you hear me?

SCROOGE

I will. I will.

MARLEY

I am here to warn you that you have yet a chance of escaping my fate.

SCROOGE

You were always a good friend to me, Jacob.

MARLEY

You will be haunted this night by three spirits.

SCROOGE

Is that my chance?

MARLEY

It is.

SCROOGE

I think I'd rather not.

MARLEY

Without their visits you cannot hope to escape my fate. They are the spirits of this most holy season - the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future. Expect the first when the church bell tolls one.

SCROOGE

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

MARLEY

Expect the second and the third each when the hour has struck. And for your own sake, remember what has passed between us.

SCROOGE

Jacob!

MARLEY

Look to see me no longer...

Ghost Dancers force Marley exit, scrooge is alone.

SCROOGE

Jacob? Jacob! (Scrooge searches the space) There's nothing. Nothing! Could I have imagined it? I must be working too hard. Yes, that's it! I just need some rest. A good night's sleep, and I'll be right as rain. Well, then, to bed! (Scrooge goes to bed.)

Scene 3
The Ghost of Christmas Past

Ghost dance. The church bell chimes 1.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (Off)

Ebenezer!

SCROOGE

Hello?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Ebenezer!

SCROOGE

I know that voice.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (entering)

Ebenezer!

SCROOGE

Mother Superior?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Oh... So you remember me, eh? Bueno! You haven't forgotten everything then.

SCROOGE

What are you doing here?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I am el Espíritu de Christmas past.

SCROOGE

Long past?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

No, your past, tonto! You were told I would come, Benito.

SCROOGE

Benito? No one has called me that in years.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I am here to make you remember.

SCROOGE

Remember what?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Benito, lo juro, you are more foolish now than when you were a boy! To make you remember everything. Everything you have left behind! Tu raíces, tu familia! And most of all, to make you remember el espíritu Navideño.

SCROOGE

Eh?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

The spirit of Christmas! Do I need to wake you like when you were a boy? (she takes out a ruler)

SCROOGE

No! No! La Regla! I remember, I remember!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Take my hand, Ebenezer, and see what I have to show you.

Scrooge takes her hand. They are transported to Scrooge's past.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Recuerdas este lugar?

SCROOGE

Yes, I remember! I was a student here. This was the school where father sent me to study English after mother died. You were my teacher, Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Sí, Benito. Yo era tu maestra.

SCROOGE

But the schoolyard is empty!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Of course, Ebenezer. Es Nochebuena. But not quite empty. Mira. (Boy Scrooge enters singing a sad Villancico) Hay un chico solo aquí.

SCROOGE

Yes. That boy spent too much time alone.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Disculpa, Ebenezer. If you remember, I have a part to play in this Christmas.

Mother Superior enters the scene with Boy Scrooge. In the scene, she has a cough.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Ebenezer?

BOY SCROOGE (standing)

Sí señora! I mean, yes ma'am!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Es Navidad, Benito. We can speak Español.

BOY SCROOGE

Gracias ma'am, but I cannot. Father says I must only use Inglés.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Only English?

BOY SCROOGE

Sí, Mother Superior. My older sister speaks Español, but I must learn English. Father says a boy who speaks English will always have work in the north.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Hmmm... Sabio.

BOY SCROOGE

I am forbidden to speak Español, Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

¿Prohibido?

BOY SCROOGE

Sí. Yes. Father says "English is for money. Español is for..."

MOTHER SUPERIOR

For?

BOY SCROOGE

"women and peasants" señora.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

So at home, you speak no Español?

BOY SCROOGE

Only in secret to my sister. But if father hears me, he becomes very angry.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Hmmm... (she coughs) Ebenezer, it is smart to learn English, but Español es quien eres. It is your family and your roots. It is important to learn, but you must also- (she breaks off into a coughing fit)

BOY SCROOGE

Are you all right, Mother Superior?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Estoy bien. Just a cough. (she recovers) So Benito, where will you be for Navidad?

BOY SCROOGE

In my room, ma'am.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Alone? For Navidad? Nonsense. Why don't you come to the convent and join the sisters for Christmas dinner?

BOY SCROOGE

Really?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

You would be more than welcome. But Benito, Sister Magdalena-

BOY SCROOGE (Interrupting)

Sister Magdalena always makes me eat more frijoles when I tell her I am full!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Oye! Sister Magdalena just wants to make sure you grow up fuerte! (As she pinches his cheeks and shakes his shoulders) Eres muy delgado.

BOY SCROOGE

Yes Ma'am.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

¡No me interrumpas! What was I saying? Oh! Sister Magdalena, Sister Grace and Sister Ana Lucia do not speak Inglés. Tendrás que hablar español en la cena.

BOY SCROOGE

Oh... Gracias, thank you, Sister, but father would not like that.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (as cough returns)

Podría ser nuestro secreto? Our secret?

BOY SCROOGE

No ma'am... But thank you ma'am.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (coughing)

Very well, Benito, but if you change your mind, eres bienvenido.

Mother Superior leaves the scene and returns to Scrooge.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

And now you spend every Christmas alone, don't you?

SCROOGE

You never did recover from that cough.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Sí Ebenezer. That was my last Christmas. But do you want to hear the good news?

SCROOGE

Good news?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

It never bothers me at all now! (she laughs, Scrooge does not)

SCROOGE

I tire of this, Mother Superior. Take me away from here!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Wait!

Esperanza enters.

ESPERANZA

Ebenezer!

BOY SCROOGE

Esperanza?

SCROOGE

Esperanza?

Ebenezer! Vengo a llevarte a casa.

ESPERANZA

Mi casa, Esperanza?

BOY SCROOGE

Sí Ebenezer! A casa.

ESPERANZA

But papá...

BOY SCROOGE

Papá se siente muy mal por lo que pasó! Él promete ser más amable. Me pidió que viniera a recogerte y llevarte a casa para Navidad! Pero primero vamos ir a la posada! Vámonos!!! Piñatas, dulces y todo!!

ESPERANZA

Estoy tan feliz de que estés aquí. Feliz Navidad, Esperanza!

BOY SCROOGE

Feliz Navidad, Ebenezer.

ESPERANZA

Exit Boy Scrooge and Esperanza.

A tiny girl con un gran corazón.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Sí... yes.

SCROOGE

She died a young woman, and had children?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

One child.

SCROOGE

Your nephew, Federico, sí?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Sí.

SCROOGE

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Él es el último de tu familia.

SCROOGE

Yes, he's the last of our family! What of it?!? He's a boy, a boy, a silly boy! I haven't the time to waste on him.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Familia? A waste of time, Benito? Hmm... Let's see another Navidad.

She takes his hand, they travel again.

Scene 4
Don Peluche

Joyful music starts.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Reconoces este lugar?

SCROOGE

Why... I was an apprentice here!

Don Peluche enters with Young Scrooge and another apprentice carrying a table.

DON PELUCHE

Benito! Ricardo! Vamanos muchachos! (calling off) Señora Peluche!

SCROOGE

It's Don Peluche – my old jefe!

DON PELUCHE

Pongan la mesa aquí, chicos. (calling off) Señora Peluche!

SCROOGE

Don Peluche alive again!

DON PELUCHE

No no no! Put the table over there, mis chicos! Let's see, let's see, we have el panadero, el carnicero, el abogado, los niños... (calling off) Señora Peluche!!! No no, Ricardo, Benito, put the table back here. We need room para bailar. You know how Señora Peluche loves to dance. She has invited so many people and we need to make enough room for everyone to dance. Es Navidad, chicos! Es Navidad! (calling off) Señora Peluche-

Señora Peluche enters with María and Bella carrying tablecloth and food. María and Bella hurry to start setting the table.

SEÑORA PELUCHE

Deja de gritar! Aquí estoy, hombre loco!

All

Feliz Navidad, hola, Bella, etc.

SCROOGE

Look! Look! It's my old friends. Ricardo and María. And... And...

YOUNG SCROOGE

Bella.

SCROOGE

Bella.

Beat.

DON PELUCHE

Feliz Navidad, Señora Peluche! ¡Qué guapa te ves en tu vestido de Navidad!

Don Peluche approaches and tries to kiss Señora Peluche.

SEÑORA PELUCHE

Ahora no, no seas tonto payaso! Nuestros invitados ya están aquí!

There is a knock on the door.

DON PELUCHE

Sí, sí! Our guests! Rapido, Benito, Ricardo! Let them in. Let them all in!!!

The guests come from all directions and there is a raucous northern Mexican dance. All join in. Even Scrooge is drawn into the fun. Eventually the dance comes to its end.

DON PELUCHE

Welcome one and all a nuestra casa. La Señora Peluche y las chicas han preparado mucha comida deliciosa!

SEÑORA PELUCHE

Sí, sí! Tenemos tamales, buñuelos, chile colorado, caldo de res, enchiladas, frijoles, champurrado, arroz con leche, y rompopo.

DON PELUCHE

Asi que, mi amigos... Buen provecho!

Everyone cheers and moves up to the table. A slow song starts playing.

RICARDO

Quieres bailar conmigo María?

MARÍA

Sí, Ricardo.

They dance. Other couples join, while Young Scrooge and Bella look on.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Bella.

BELLA

Benito.

Beat.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Feliz Navidad, Bella.

BELLA

Feliz Navidad, Benito.

Beat.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Es un vestido muy hermoso.

BELLA

Gracias, Benito.

Beat.

SCROOGE

Well?... Ask her to dance!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Quieres bailar conmigo?

BELLA

Sí, Benito.

They dance with Scrooge looking on. They are about to kiss.

DON PELUCHE

Everyone. Levanten todos sus bebidas. It's time for a toast! There is champurrado for those of you that have to wake up early... and rompope for those of us that do not!

RICARDO

El Brindis!

ALL

A toast! El Brindis! (etc)

DON PELUCHE

Allright, quiet, quiet. Here's to Christmas then, eh? To the joys of this holy season – eating and drinking and dancing! To friends and familia; to those that are here and those that are not here, but who we keep in our hearts. Most of all... Por el amor! Los amigos! Y la amistad! One and all, I wish you Feliz Navidad!

ALL

Feliz Navidad!

Music plays and party resumes.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Wait Bella.

BELLA

¿Tienes algo que decirme, Benito?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Sí, Bella... I want to say...

BELLA

Sí?

SCROOGE

Tell her she's beautiful!

YOUNG SCROOGE

You dance very well.

SCROOGE

Oh!

BELLA

Tú también, Ebenezer, para mi sorpresa.

YOUNG SCROOGE

You're surprised I dance well?

BELLA

Sí, eres un misterio. Who is the real Ebenezer?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

An excellent question.

SCROOGE

Oh, hush!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Bella, the real Ebenezer is the man who will live in your heart.

SCROOGE

Excellent!

YOUNG SCROOGE

But we will not live as peasants, Bella. I shall make my own way, I promise. I will not be the poor man you see before you.

SCROOGE

No, you fool! Don't say that.

BELLA

I like the man before me.

YOUNG SCROOGE

No no! I won't make you live poor. I will have a position and dinero.

BELLA

But Ebenezer-

YOUNG SCROOGE

Do not protest! I am resolute! We will live well.

SCROOGE (to Mother Superior)

Why won't he shut up?

BELLA

Ay Benito. Sí estamos juntos, vamos estar felizes.

They kiss, Scrooge sighs. Music changes to something up tempo.

BELLA (turning to go)

Feliz Navidad, Benito.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Espera. You can't go now.

BELLA

I must. Mi mamá me quiere en casa temprano.

Bella exits; Ricardo and María come down to Young Scrooge to tease him.

RICARDO

Beso beso, Benito!

MARÍA

Tranquilo, Ricardo. Ebenezer está enamorado!

Señora Peluche bursts in interrupting music.

SEÑORA PELUCHE

Don Peluche! Silencio por favor! ¿Dónde está Don Peluche?

DON PELUCHE

¿Cuál es el problema cariño?

SEÑORA PELUCHE

¡El alcalde está aquí!

DON PELUCHE

The mayor??

SEÑORA PELUCHE

¡Sí! Por tanto ruido tan tarde en la noche.

DON PELUCHE

Too much noise?

Mayor enters with sheriff.

MAYOR

Qué pasa aquí, no tienen vergüenza?

Everyone freezes.

MAYOR

Making so much noise so late at night! You keep the whole town awake! What do you have to say for yourselves???

No one speaks or moves.

MAYOR

Nada, eh? Well then, I have something to say... And I say... Feliz Navidad!

He and the sheriff pull out jugs of Mezcal and start passing them around. The music strikes back up. The party moves outside (off stage) Everyone exits with calls of Feliz Navidad, Merry Christmas, Goodnight, Buenas noches, etc. Scrooge and Mother Superior are left alone onstage with Scrooge still caught up in the festivities.

SCROOGE

Old Don Peluche! I'd almost forgotten. What a man. What a jefe!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

¿Fue tan especial? A small thing to make these people so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE

Small?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Pequeña, sí. He spent very little on this fiesta – a few pesos to amuse his friends and workers. ¿Es tan generoso?

SCROOGE

It isn't the money, Mother Superior. Can't you see?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

¿Qué cosa?

SCROOGE

It may only be a few pesos, but the joy he gives is as great as if it cost... a fortune.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

What's wrong?

SCROOGE

Nothing.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Something?

SCROOGE

Nothing! Only... I should like to say a word to my clerk, Roberto Cratchit, just now, that's all.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Tendrá que esperar, Benito. My time grows short. Vamonos!

He takes her hand and travels again.

Scene 5
Don Peluche part II

SCROOGE

Where are we now?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

No dónde, cuándo. Seven Christmases have passed.

SCROOGE

Seven years passed so quickly?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Sí. Un latido del corazón.

Don Peluche with letter, Marley (alive), and Young Scrooge enter.

DON PELUCHE

Señor Marley-

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Shhhh!

DON PELUCHE

A ver si entiendo correctamente... ¿Está usted exigiendo este pago?

MARLEY

That document is correct. We have purchased all your debts.

DON PELUCHE

¿Qué? My debts?

MARLEY

Don't play the fool, Mr. Peluche. You have business debts on both sides of the river. They have been purchased by the firm of Scrooge and Marley. They belong to us now.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Es cierto, Don Peluche.

MARLEY

And we demand full payment. Eighteen thousand dollars.

DON PELUCHE

Eighteen thousand dollars? Pero no tengo dieciocho mil dólares. Benito. Benito, por favor, soy yo, Benito!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Don Peluche...

MARLEY

Mr. Scrooge, do you have something to say to Mr. Peluche?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Mr. Peluche, we are prepared to accept forfeiture of your business to discharge your debts.

DON PELUCHE

Qué?

Beat.

MARLEY

It appears Mr. Peluche does not understand. Perhaps you should explain it again.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Señor Peluche, sí no puede pagar, tenemos que tomar su negocio.

DON PELUCHE

Benito, cómo puedes hacerme esto?

MARLEY

May I suggest we step inside to finalize the paperwork?

DON PELUCHE

I wish to speak with señor Scrooge alone.

MARLEY

Ebenezer?

SCROOGE

Yes! Speak to him!

YOUNG SCROOGE

It's all right. Give us a moment.

MARLEY

Very well. Don't be long, Ebenezer. Time wasted is time ill spent. (exits)

DON PELUCHE

¿Qué hice para merecer esto, Benito? What have I done?

YOUNG SCROOGE

You have done nothing, business is business. And I am a grown man. My name is 'Ebenezer'.

DON PELUCHE

Very well, Ebenezer. ¿No estabas feliz aquí?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes, I was happy enough here... As an apprentice.

DON PELUCHE

I do not trust this señor Marley, Ebenezer. Esto no terminará bien. Vas a ver. Con dinero baila el perro.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Don't talk nonsense. I am prospering!

DON PELUCHE

But Ebenezer, what is my family to live on? Por favor, help me, Ebenzer!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Very well. I won't leave you with nothing. (taking cash from his wallet) Here take this.

DON PELUCHE

Dinero de tu bolsillo? You dishonor me!

YOUNG SCROOGE

You dishonor yourself, sir. As a man of business, you should have spent your time attending to your accounts.

DON PELUCHE

Benito, no puedo vivir sin mi trabajo! Seguramente entiendes.

YOUNG SCROOGE

¿Por qué perdiste tanto dinero, viejo tonto?

SCROOGE

Oh... Oh... Did I say that?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

You did.

DON PELUCHE

May God have mercy on your soul... Mr. Scrooge. (exits)

SCROOGE

Mother Superior, this is not fair.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

¿Qué quieres decir?

SCROOGE

This wasn't personal. It was business.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Your life is your business, Benito. Blessed are the merciful.

SCROOGE

Spirit-

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Espera. Someone is coming.

Scene 6
Bella

BELLA (entering)

Feliz Navidad, Ebenezer.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Ah, Bell. Punctual to the minute.

BELLA

Parece complacerte.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Of course it pleases me. Time wasted is time ill spent.

BELLA

I think... a minute here or there is not so important.

YOUNG SCROOGE

And your English is coming along too!

BELLA

Sí... yes.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Bell, I asked you to meet me to speak with you about something important.

BELLA

Importante? Qué?

YOUNG SCROOGE

The firm of Scrooge and Marley is thriving! I am established! We will finally have enough money!

BELLA

But to me, money is not so... necesario.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Don't you understand? We will never have to worry about being poor. Our life together can begin! (He takes out a ring)

BELLA

Oh... Ebenezer.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I wished to surprise you. (He gives her the ring)

BELLA

Sí. Estoy sorprendida. Mucho.

YOUNG SCROOGE

You seem displeased. Are you angry because I have acted to secure our future?

BELLA

Our future? Ay, Ebenezer... Tengo miedo...has llegado a amar algo más que a mí.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Ridiculous. What on earth would I love more than you.

BELLA

Dinero.

Beat.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I see.

BELLA

Has cambiado. You've changed.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes, I've changed for the better. I have learned that there is nothing the world treats with such cruelty as poverty, yet there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth.

BELLA

Por favor, Ebenezer. Estás hablando demasiado rápido. No entiendo.

YOUNG SCROOGE

I may be changed, Bell, but I am not changed toward you. We can still be married.

BELLA

I wish I could believe you. Con el tiempo, vas a lamentar casarte conmigo, una mujer que no tiene nada.

YOUNG SCROOGE

That's not true. It does not matter to me that you are poor.

BELLA

It is true. Deberías casarte con una mujer con dinero o con propiedad. I am not the woman for you. (Giving ring back) I'm sorry, Ebenezer. May you be happy in the life you have chosen. (She exits.)

SCROOGE

You fool! Don't just stand there. Stop her! Stop her! Mother Superior, ya no me muestres más. Ya no!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Qué?

SCROOGE

Remove me from this place!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Todavía no, mijo. La paciencia es una virtud.

Scene 7
Don Peluche Part III

Re-enter Marley with the deed to Don Peluche's property. Don Peluche trailing.

MARLEY

Ebenezer... Ebenezer!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Eh?

MARLEY

We are waiting, Ebenezer. It is time to conclude our affairs. Are you resolute?

YOUNG SCROOGE

Yes... No... I'm not certain.

DON PELUCHE

Por favor, Ebenezer. Éramos como una familia.

MARLEY (pulling Young Scrooge aside)

Ebenezer it is time to choose your path and accept your fate. No one can do it for you. Will you go back to what you were, a pauper scratching at the dirt, or will you choose the future?

YOUNG SCROOGE (looking at ring)

I...

Beat.

MARLEY

Very well, Ebenezer. (begins to exit)

YOUNG SCROOGE

Jacob, wait!

Young Scrooge moves upstage and looks at Don Peluche for a moment.

SCROOGE

Don't do this.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Give me the deed.

Marley gives Young Scrooge papers and pen. Young Scrooge is about to sign.

DON PELUCHE

Vendido!

YOUNG SCROOGE

Señor!

DON PELUCHE

I mean this, Ebenezer. Vendido. Te arrepentirás de esto. If you turn your back, people, will not forget.

Young Scrooge signs deed. Don Peluche hangs his head.

SCROOGE

No!!!

MARLEY

Excellent! Shall we go celebrate, Mr. Scrooge?

Exit Marley, Young Scrooge. Don Peluche exits separately.

SCROOGE

Mother Superior, no more memories, I beg you. Why do you delight in torturing me?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

No disfruto tu dolor. I only show you the truth.

SCROOGE

Then show me no more of these things I cannot change. The past is the past!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Sí. El pasado es el pasado. But look in your corazón, Ebenezer. ¿Qué vas a hacer con tu futuro? Tu futuro... tu futuro... tu futuro...

She is gone, Scrooge is back home.

UNDERTAKER

When Scrooge looked up. He was back in his melancholy townhouse.

SEPULTURERO

He searched the room, but could find nothing out of place. Nada ¿Habrás sido un sueño?

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge thought of all that had transpired...

SEPULTURERO

y en todo lo que había visto.

UNDERTAKER

The ghost of Jacob Marley.

SEPULTURERO

y Mother Superior.

UNDERTAKER

He thought of his sister Esperanza and of his years with Don Peluche. But most of all...

SEPULTURERO

Pero, sobre todo, pensó en Bella. Bella – and how he had lost her.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge considered all that the spirit had shown him - the places, the people, the Christmases gone by, and had only one thing to say...

SCROOGE

Humbug!

End of Act I

ACT II
Scene 8
Christmas Present

The same as end of Act I but without Undertaker and Sepulturero.

SCROOGE

Humbug!

Scrooge goes about the business of going back to sleep. Ghost dance.

PRESENT (enters with booming laughter)

Ha ha ha ha ha. Ebenezer Scrooge. Ha ha ha ha. Ebenezer Scrooge. Ha ha ha!

SCROOGE (seeing Present)

Ahhh! Who are you?

PRESENT

Who do you think I am?

SCROOGE

Saint Nicholas?

PRESENT

If you like.

SCROOGE

Papa Noel?

PRESENT

Si tú prefieres.

Beat.

SCROOGE

Santa Claus?

PRESENT

...Really?

SCROOGE

Who are you?!?

PRESENT

I am the ghost of Christmas Present! I am the warmth, the joy, el espíritu of this most holy season. Whenever a present is wrapped or a gift is given; whenever verses are read in solemn reverence or carols are sung with joyous exuberance; whenever caldito simmers in the olla or champurrado warms la casa I am there. I am the comfort, the joy... the brilliance of the season.

SCROOGE

Then it is you who deprive people of their faculties?

PRESENT

Excuse me?

SCROOGE

You seek out the gullible and fill their souls with hope. They celebrate 'peace on earth, good will toward men' when they should be working!

PRESENT

I do not seek. It is mankind who seeks me! No matter how dark the hour, all people crave hope. It is their heart's desire.

SCROOGE

Bah!

PRESENT

Walk with me, and I will show you what I mean.

Present and Scrooge begin traveling the city streets. Music. People are variously singing, drinking, celebrating, etc.

PRESENT

Look around you on this holy Nochebuena. What do you see?

SCROOGE

Fools.

PRESENT

Ebenezer.

SCROOGE

I mean it spirit! I see pitiful fools frittering away their time and money when they could be earning for the future.

As Present speaks each of the following exchanges occurs onstage.

PRESENT

Look more carefully. Does it matter that he speaks no Inglés, and she has never been across the Río? Does it matter that two months ago, these two primos parted with ugly palabras? Does it matter that this one is rich while this poor hombre can't even afford the zapatos on his feet? Everywhere you look - people setting aside their differences and coming together to revel in the warmth of this blessed season, Navidad.

SCROOGE

You're worse than my nephew.

PRESENT

You're a hard man, Ebenezer Scrooge. Very well then, follow me.

Scene shift.

Scene 9
The Cratchits Part I

The Cratchit house. Mrs. Cratchit, Belinda, Luisa.

SCROOGE

Spirit, what am I doing in this tiny hovel?

PRESENT

These people may be poor, Ebenezer, but they truly know el espíritu de Navidad!

MRS. CRATCHIT

¡Mira la hora! What is keeping everyone en Nochebuena?

BELINDA

No sé, mama.

SCROOGE

Why is it so dark? Why don't they light a lamp?

PRESENT

Oil costs money, Ebenezer. Candles cost money. I thought you liked the dark because it was cheap.

Pedro enters taking off jacket.

PEDRO

¡Feliz Navidad!

LUISA (hugging him)

Hola, Pedro.

PEDRO

Las calles están tan llenas que apenas puedes moverte!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Pedro. Remember, we are working on nuestro Inglés?

PEDRO

Sí, mama! (working it out) The streets... are full of people for... Navidad!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Christmas, Pedro.

PEDRO

Sí, Christmas!

MRS. CRATCHIT

So what did you see Pedro? En Inglés.

PEDRO

Sellers everywhere! So much to see. And the smells! Elote y Canela... Chocolate y café!

LUISA

Chocolate?

PEDRO

Sí, Luisa!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Belinda, Belinda, get the forks and knives. Trae los tenedores y las cucharas, por favor.

BELINDA

Sí, mama.

PEDRO

Mi corbata está... crooked.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh, Pedro! (starts to adjust his tie)

Marta enters.

MARTA

Feliz Navidad!

MRS. CRATCHIT, BELINDA, LUISA

Hola, Marta! Feliz Navidad.

PEDRO

Welcome home, Marta.

MARTA

Pedro, tu Inglés se oye muy bien!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Yes, and we are helping him. You are late today?

MARTA

Yes. We had so much work to finish today. So much sewing.

SCROOGE

Good! Someone is working!

PRESENT

She works too hard, Ebenezer.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Bueno, olvídale. You are here for Navidad. That is what matters.

PEDRO

Marta! Can you smell the tamales de Navidad?

LUISA

Y buñuelos?

MARTA (inhaling)

Mmmm... Yes! What kind of tamales?

BELINDA

Queso!!

PEDRO

Queso!!

Pedro, Belinda, and Luisa are dancing around Marta.

SCROOGE

Queso? Who eats tamales with no meat?

PRESENT

This is the Christmas they can afford, Ebenezer.

MARTA

¿Queso, mamá?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Sí. And Canela!

LUISA

Para buñuelos!

MARTA

So special! How did you get them?

MRS. CRATCHIT

They were gifts from señora Galicia. Su hijo tiene un trabajo en el norte. Fresh queso!

PEDRO

Come and see! (pulling her)

SCROOGE

Queso? Why bother?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Pedro, let your sister rest. Now help Belinda y Luisa preparar a la mesa.

Belinda, Luisa, and Pedro setting the table.

MARTA (to Mrs. Cratchit)

Where are Papá and Tiny Tim?

SCROOGE

Tiny Tim?

PRESENT

Shhhh!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Late coming home from the posada.

SCROOGE

How many children are there?

PRESENT

Una vida plena, Ebenezer!

MARTA

Pedro, you look like a handsome gentleman in father's ribbon tie.

PEDRO

Gracias, Marta. It's mine now. Papá give it to me.

MARTA

Gave it to me.

PEDRO
Sí! Gave it to me.

MARTA
You are almost grown up.

PEDRO
Sí! Papá is looking for a job for me north of the river.

SCROOGE
Good!

PEDRO
But he says I must have strong Inglés.

SCROOGE
Right you are!

Roberto is approaching singing Christmas music.

BELINDA & LUISA
¡Ya llegó papá!

MRS. CRATCHIT
Your father is finally home!

PEDRO
Hide Marta, hide!

MARTA
Hide?

PEDRO
Sí! We will play a joke on him!

Marta hides. Enter Roberto and Tiny Tim – Roberto carrying a covered package.

ROBERTO
Feliz Navidad!

TINY TIM
Feliz Navidad a todos!

MRS. CRATCHIT, BELINDA, and LUISA

Feliz Navidad!

PEDRO

Merry Christmas, Papá!

ROBERTO

Pedro, tu Inglés sounds muy bien.

PEDRO

I have been practicing, Papá!

ROBERTO

En Nochebuena? Then I will practice too. (crossing to Mrs. Cratchit) Mamá is a good teacher.

MRS. CRATCHIT

I was worried about you, Beto.

ROBERTO

Nos quedamos para la posada.

TINY TIM

Y comimos dulces.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Dulces? Roberto, tu dieta. How many candies did you eat?

ROBERTO

Solo uno...

MRS. CRATCHIT

Roberto...

ROBERTO

Dos?

TINY TIM

CINCO!!!!!!

ROBERTO

¡Ay niño, me lo prometiste!

Roberto begins chasing and tickling Tiny Tim for giving away the secret.

TINY TIM (squealing from tickling)

No papá!

ROBERTO (interrupting)

¡Esperen, esperen! Falta alguien... Marta. ¿Dónde está Marta?

SCROOGE

Under the table, you dolt.

MRS. CRATCHIT

No pudo venir.

PEDRO

Sí, Papá. Marta is not coming.

ROBERTO

Not coming? En Nochebuena?

MRS. CRATCHIT

No. Trabaja. She must work. Y mañana también.

TINY TIM

No Marta?

ROBERTO

But... Navidad...

MARTA (Coming out from under the table)

Feliz Navidad, Papá!

ROBERTO

Marta!

Various reactions to joke, Roberto hugs Marta.

MARTA

Feliz Navidad, Pequeñito.

TINY TIM

Feliz Navidad, Marta.

ROBERTO

Miren, miren! Look what I have! (Roberto fetches the covered package) Miren nomás lo que traje!

Roberto holds up the package and pulls off the cover revealing a small piñata. All react with enthusiasm and cries of "Una piñata" "Qué bonita" etc. Belinda and Luisa dance while celebrating. Roberto hangs the piñata or sets it on the table as a centerpiece.

SCROOGE

You call that a piñata? It's so tiny!

MRS. CRATCHIT (aside to Roberto)

¿Como la pagaste? Can we afford it?

ROBERTO (aside to Mrs. Cratchit)

La iglesia give us leftover from the posada. Don't worry, mi amor.

SCROOGE

A paltry piñata. Why there's not room inside for two skinny walnuts.

BELINDA

¿Podemos romper la piñata, papá?

MRS. CRATCHIT

After dinner.

ROBERTO

Sí, después de cenar Luisa.

PEDRO (lifting Tiny Tim)

Pequeñito, come smell the tamales!

BELINDA

¡Tenemos queso!

LUISA

Y buñuelos!

As Pedro, Belinda, and Luisa exit with Tiny Tim.

MRS. CRATCHIT (calling after them)

Don't lift the lid! The steam will come out!

MARTA

We had so much work today, Papá. And I have to be right back sewing on Tuesday.

SCROOGE

Good for her!

ROBERTO

Then you will rest tonight and sleep late mañana.

MRS. CRATCHIT

How was Tiny Tim en la Iglesia?

ROBERTO

Perfecto. Bien calladito y poniendo atención. On the way home, he told me that he hoped the people in church saw his crutches.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Why?

ROBERTO

He said if people see him para Navidad, they would remember who made lame men walk and blind men see. He grows stronger, no? Cada día crece más fuerte, no crees?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Sí, Roberto. Más fuerte. Every day.

BELINDA (re entering)

Mamá, creo que los tamales ya están listos!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Oh! Sí. Ya es hora! (Calling) Pedro, bring the Tamales! Belinda, get the frijoles y el arroz.

Mass action of getting table ready.

BELINDA

Sí, mamá.

PEDRO (entering)

Everything smells delicious!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Marta, can you help your brother?

MARTA

Sí, mamá. Pequeñito, Siéntate aquí.

LUISA (entering)

¿Podemos traer los buñuelos?

MRS. CRATCHIT

Todavía no, Luisa. Ay, I forgot las tortillas!

ROBERTO (re-entering with tortillas)

Aquí Están.

MRS. CRATCHIT

What are we missing?

ROBERTO

Nada, nada. Everything is ready y huele maravilloso, mi amor. (he kisses her to family delight)
Gather round la mesa. We will have a prayer for Nochebuena. Bajen la cabeza.

PRESENT (to Scrooge)

Bow your head.

ROBERTO

Niñito Jesús que naciste en Belén,
te damos las gracias por esta comida y por proteger a nuestra familia.
Sigue dándonos fuerza para ser siempre bondadosos con nuestros hermanos.
Bendice esta cena preparada a tu nombre,
amén.

ALL

Amén.

All begin to grab for food.

ROBERTO

¡Esperen! Before we eat, we must have... un brindis!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Sí, a toast!

A scramble for glasses and drinks.

All

Un brindis! Un brindis! Etc.

ROBERTO

Ahem... Para Nochebuena... I give you the founder of our feast... Señor Scrooge.

SCROOGE (to Present)

Hah!

MRS. CRATCHIT

No Roberto! ¡No voy a honrar a ese hombre!

SCROOGE

What?

ROBERTO

Cariño... Es Nochebuena.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Founder of the feast? He works you to the bone, Roberto - you know he does! Y pa' qué? Nada! A few pesos! And you with a family to feed!

ROBERTO (taking her aside)

Mi amor, the children.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Déjalos escuchar! ojalá estuviera aquí. Founder of the feast! If he were here, I'd give him something to feast on! le diría hasta de lo que se va a morir! No, Roberto, No voy a hacerlo. I will never drink to the health of that clutching cruel... viejo vendido!

ROBERTO

Mi querida

MRS. CRATCHIT

So help me, Roberto...

ROBERTO

Para Navidad...

MRS. CRATCHIT (a beat, then relenting)

Very well, Roberto. (returning to table) I will drink to his health para Navidad. And for you. But not for him! (taking her glass) A long life to him. Feliz Navidad y un Feliz Año Nuevo. Señor Scrooge.

All (toasting)

Señor Scrooge.

SCROOGE (to Present)

There. You see?

ROBERTO

And now... ¡A Comer!

There is a flurry of serving and passing and eating.

All (variously):

Marta - ¡Las tortillas están deliciosas!

Pedro - ¡Más frijoles por favor!

Tiny Tim - ¡Están muy buenos!

Roberto - ¡Qué picosa está la salsa este año !

Marta - Sóplale a la sopa si está muy caliente.

Pedro - Las papas están calientes.

Belinda - Solo un tamal a cada uno, Pedro.

Luisa - Por favor pasa el arroz!

Mrs. Cratchit - Tiny Tim, límpiate la boca.

Pedro - ¡El queso está cremoso!

Belinda - ¡Qué tamales tan ricos!

MRS. CRATCHIT

Who wants more Champurrado?

All

¡Yo!

They return to their dinner.

SCROOGE

You call that a feast? No meat in the tamales? Frijoles y arroz? ONE tamal per person? Why, there's hardly any food at all.

PRESENT

But between the rice, the beans, the salsa, the potatoes, the soup, the tortillas, and the tamales, everyone will have enough.

All the Cratchits push back from the table.

All

Ahhhhh!

ROBERTO (getting up and going to his wife)

Esposa mía, it was a feast! The best Nochebuena dinner ever! And now it is time for...

LUISA

¡Los buñuelos!

All

Sí! Sí! Los buñuelos! Etc.

Mrs. Cratchit exits to get Buñuelos.

ROBERTO

Rápido, ¡Necesitamos un drumroll!

The kids drumroll on the table. Mrs. Cratchit re-enters, sets the buñuelos on table, and lifts the cover exposing a tower of buñuelos. A beat of silence. Then the family responds in reverence.

ROBERTO

Such a tower of buñuelos, my dear.

MARTA

Está enorme!

PEDRO

Like a pillar of sugar.

TINY TIM

Y la canela.

BELINDA

Huelen delicioso.

LUISA

Son los mejores buñuelos... del mundo!

ROBERTO

Muy cierto, Luisa. Cariño, they are the best buñuelos you have ever made.

MRS. CRATCHIT (embarrassed)

Beto.

ROBERTO

Feliz Navidad a todos nosotros. And "God bless us."

All

God bless us.

TINY TIM

God bless us... a todos.

Family exits.

SCROOGE

Spirit. The little boy.

PRESENT

Tiny Tim?

SCROOGE

Yes. Will he live?

PRESENT

Next Christmas, I see a lonely crutch in the corner and an empty seat at the table. If the path of his life does not change, the child will certainly die.

SCROOGE

No. Say he will live!

PRESENT

If he is going to die, he had better do it and decrease the surplus population!

SCROOGE

Spirit, do not turn my words against me.

PRESENT

Then choose carefully how you speak! Is this child part of the surplus? Will you decide who will live and who will die? It may be, in the sight of heaven, that you are more worthless than this child and millions like him all over the world. Man, if man you be in heart, hold your tongue until you have discovered what the surplus is and where it is. Come!

SCROOGE

Where to now, spirit?

PRESENT

To a place where people know me and celebrate!

Scene change.

Scene 10
Federico's Party

Federico and his party guests enter.

FEDERICO

Ha, ha, ha! He said that Christmas was a humbug! I think he meant it too!

SCROOGE

Federico. Ugh.

CATHERINE

Well, shame on him, Federico.

SCROOGE

Who is this woman?

PRESENT

Federico's wife. Your niece, whom you have ignored.

FEDERICO

He's a funny old fellow, that's the truth, and not as kind as he might be.

JORGE

Pero él es rico! You always say so.

FEDERICO

Oh yes, he's rich, Jorge, y qué? His wealth is of no use to him. He doesn't help anyone with it. He doesn't make himself comfortable with it. He certainly never gives any of it to us! Ha, ha, ha!

CATHERINE

I have no patience with him!

FEDERICO

Oh, I have. I feel sorry for him.

JORGE

Sorry?

FEDERICO

Yes! Who suffers by all his bad behavior? Solo él. Himself. Siempre. He has taken into his head to dislike us and so he won't join us for Christmas dinner. What's the consequence?

ROSE
¡Él es el único que se pierde una cena sabrosa!

JORGE
Sí sí! A very good dinner.

PERCY
Hear hear!

CATHERINE
Thank you.

FEDERICO
I was going to say that the consequence is that he misses some pleasant moments and a comunidad that would do him no harm.

CATHERINE
Enough of Uncle Scrooge. He will spoil our suppers!

ROSE, JORGE, PERCY
Indeed, sí, yes, etc.

SCROOGE
Humbug!

FEDERICO
All right then, shall we play a game?

JORGE
Sí sí! Charadas?

ROSE
Oh, oh, oh! I have a new game. It's called "Sí y No"!

CATHERINE
How do you play?

ROSE
Federico will go first. (to Federico) Tienes que pensar en algo. Put something in your mind.

FEDERICO
Working on it.

ROSE
Now we ask Federico questions, but he can only answer "Sí" o "No".

PERCY
Wonderful!

ROSE
¿Ya pensaste en algo?

FEDERICO
Give me a moment!

JORGE
Esto podría llevar mucho tiempo.

ROSE
Jorge!

CATHERINE
Well, Federico?

FEDERICO
Oh! Yes! Yes! I have something! Yes!

JORGE
¡Excelente!

CATHERINE
Is it living?

PERCY
Is it an object?

FEDERICO
Sí, no.

PERCY
Which?

FEDERICO
What?

JORGE
Sí o no?

FEDERICO
Both! Two questions, two answers!

ROSE
Una pregunta a la vez.

CATHERINE
Yes, one question at a time! All right, is it living?

FEDERICO
Sí... again.

JORGE (imitating Federico)
“again”.

ROSE
¿Es un animal?

FEDERICO
Sí!

ROSE
Un animal manso?

FEDERICO
No.

PERCY
So a mean animal?

FEDERICO
Sí!

PERCY
A rattlesnake?

FEDERICO
No.

JORGE
Un animal feroz?

FEDERICO
Sí!

A tiger!	SCROOGE
A wildcat?	CATHERINE
No.	FEDERICO
A bear?	PERCY
No.	FEDERICO
¿Un gallo?	ROSE
<i>All respond.</i>	
A chicken?	PERCY
¡Los gallos son malos!	ROSE
No!	FEDERICO
Does this animal grunt?	CATHERINE
Sí.	FEDERICO
A pig!	SCROOGE
Un jabalí.	JORGE
No.	FEDERICO

Does it snort?
CATHERINE

Sí.
FEDERICO

A bull!
CATHERINE

No.
FEDERICO

A rhinoceros!
PERCY

No!
FEDERICO

A buffalo?
SCROOGE

Does this animal live in a zoo?
CATHERINE

Excellent question!
SCROOGE

No.
FEDERICO

¿En la jungla?
JORGE

No.
FEDERICO

¿En las montañas?
JORGE

No.
FEDERICO

In the ocean???
JORGE

No. No. No! FEDERICO

In the desert? PERCY

No... y sí. FEDERICO

All respond in various curious ways.

Wait! ¿Este animal vive en nuestra ciudad? ROSE

Oh, in our city! Very good! SCROOGE

Sí! FEDERICO

All respond ah, oh, yes, etc.

Does it prowl the streets? PERCY

Sí. FEDERICO

A dog! A dog! SCROOGE

Un perro. ROSE

Un gato! JORGE

Not a dog OR a cat! FEDERICO

A rat! A rat! SCROOGE

A pickpocket? CATHERINE

...well...
FEDERICO

A thief.
PERCY

No.
FEDERICO

Un policía
ROSE

No!
FEDERICO

¿El Cucuí?
JORGE

He lurches around imitating El Cucuí and everyone laughs except Catherine.

CATHERINE (confused)
I don't understand. "El Cucuí"?

FEDERICO (to Catherine)
It's like... your 'Bogeyman' in the north.

JORGE
Sí, but worse because nadie sabe lo que es. El Cucuí sneaks around the desert waiting to snatch you up!

Jorge again imitates Cucuí and leaps on someone. General reaction.

Well?
SCROOGE

El Cucuí is a good guess... but wrong!
FEDERICO

Some teasing of Jorge.

¡Lo sé! ¡Lo tengo! I have it! I have it!
ROSE

JORGE
¿Qué? ¿Qué?

SCROOGE
Yes! What? What?

ROSE
Is it Federico's Tío - Ebenezer Scrooge?

FEDERICO
Sí!!

SCROOGE
What???

All react, laughing and celebrating.

JORGE
Espera! Espera! Not fair!

FEDERICO
Why?

JORGE
I guessed El Cucuí!

CATHERINE
Yes, and the way you talk, Federico, he is very much a Bogeyman!

SCROOGE
Bah!

FEDERICO (still laughing)
Zas! Oh yes, El Cucuí indeed. Oh my. Well whatever he is, he has given us a good laugh, and we must drink to his health.

CATHERINE
Oh Federico.

FEDERICO
Come on, I mean it. Everyone take a glass. Wherever he is tonight, I wish him life, health, and a Merry Christmas. He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it nonetheless, and so Feliz Navidad, Uncle Scrooge. (All respond with some personal variation on Salud or Merry Christmas or Uncle Scrooge, etc.)

Scene 11
The End of Christmas Present

Federico and his guests exiting. Scrooge and Present on stage.

SCROOGE

Spirit, why am I subjected to this ridiculous display?

PRESENT

Federico is the last member de tu familia, Ebenezer. But you have turned your back on him.

SCROOGE

And what of it, Spirit? He seems well.

PRESENT

I am not here for his welfare but for yours. Familia, Ebenezer, familia. By rejecting your nephew, you have deprived yourself of his company. Would a little human society do you so much harm?

SCROOGE

But what am I to do about it now, Spirit? I am old, and my ways are set. It is too late for me to change!

PRESENT

Too late, Ebenezer? Donde hay vida, hay esperanza. Where there is life, there is hope.

SCROOGE

Humbug!

PRESENT

We shall see, Ebenezer. We shall see. Vámonos!

SCROOGE

Where now spirit?

PRESENT

To visit the sick and struggling on both sides of the river; to see those who toil for pesos at hard labor and who live in squalor without hope. We will enter hospitals and prisons and every place where misery takes refuge.

Look around you, Ebenezer. Even en el norte, in this land of industry and plenty, there are those who have no home, no refuge, no comida, no friends, no hope, nothing to call their own. Nada. Are they less than animals?

Look upon the face of man, Ebenezer Scrooge, but most of all, look upon these.

Two emaciated children come forward.

SCROOGE

Are they yours, Spirit?

PRESENT

They are man's. This boy is Ignorancia. This girl is Necesidad. They are Ignorance and Want. Beware them both, but most of all beware the boy, for on his brow I see that written which is doom unless the writing be erased.

SCROOGE

Is there no one to help them? No place for them to go?

PRESENT

Why Ebenezer... Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

SCROOGE

No. No, no, no!!!

PRESENT (exiting)

Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?

Scene 12
The Ghost of Christmas Future

Scene shift. Ghost Dance. Bell strikes. The Ghost of Christmas Future appears behind Scrooge.

SCROOGE

La Muerte. I am now in the presence of the Spirit of Christmas Yet To Come?

The ghost never speaks but may nod or gesture.

SCROOGE

You are to show me the shadows of things that have not happened, but will happen in the time to come. Is that so?

SCROOGE

Spirit of the Future, I fear you more than any specter I have seen. But as I know your purpose is for my own good, I am prepared to bear your company. Lead on.

Scene shift to the young couple from Act I scene 1 on the street. Husband is reading a letter.

WIFE

Cariño, is it good or bad?

HUSBAND

Malo. Muy... muy malo.

SCROOGE

Espíritu. This man seems familiar to me. Do I know him?

WIFE

Déjame escuchar. Let me hear.

HUSBAND (reading)

Sir. We have received your suggested payment plan and have deemed it neither realistic nor profitable. If you cannot discharge full payment by the close of business on December 26th, we will be forced to shutter your property and evict from the premises any persons found therein. Needless to say, we have seized upon your security deposit as compensation for our inconvenience. Yours very cordially... (he stops reading)

WIFE

No. No! No! No! ¿Dónde vamos a vivir? We have no place to live!

HUSBAND

No llores, Lucia. We will survive... somehow.

They break down.

SCROOGE

Spirit, I understand. This young couple has a wicked landlord, and I will learn from this example. I will resolve to be kinder to my tenants.

Enter Undertaker and Sepulturero.

SEPULTURERO

Feliz Navidad, amigos.

UNDERTAKER

Merry Christmas!

HUSBAND

Hola, señores.

UNDERTAKER (sees that they are in distress)

Good heavens, are you all right?

HUSBAND

No, señor.

WIFE

¡Estamos siendo desalojados!

SEPULTURERO

Qué?

HUSBAND

It's true, señor. If we do not pay by tomorrow, we will be evicted.

SEPULTURERO

En Navidad? Eso no está bien. ¿Quién está haciendo esto?

UNDERTAKER

Yes, who is evicting you? Tell us.

HUSBAND

Who do you think? The worst man in town.

WIFE

Sí! "Viejo Vendido".

Beat. Undertaker and Sepulturero look at each other, then burst out laughing!

HUSBAND

You find this funny? ¿Por qué se ríen?

SEPULTURERO (recovering from laughter)

Lo siento, señor!

UNDERTAKER (recovering from laughter)

Yes, we mean no offense, señor! It's just that "Old Turncoat"...

SEPULTURERO

"Viejo Vendido"...

UNDERTAKER

Está muerto!

HUSBAND AND WIFE

What? Qué? How? Etc.

UNDERTAKER

It's true!

SEPULTURERO

Está más muerto que el Mar Muerto.

UNDERTAKER

Dead as a doornail. He's sitting on a slab waiting for us right now!

SEPULTURERO

We bury him mañana!

They laugh again.

UNDERTAKER

Mis amigos, you are about to get an extension on your rent.

WIFE

But who will take our debt?

HUSBAND

No lo sé Lucia.

SEPULTURERO

Pero sea quien sea, no puede ser peor que el “Viejo Vendido”!

UNDERTAKER

Whoever he is, I’m sure your new landlord will be more patient. Oh my, it feels wrong to laugh at the death of a man...

SEPULTURERO

But I can’t help it!!!

All four burst out laughing and exit separately with calls of Feliz Navidad and Merry Christmas.

SCROOGE

Oh spirit... Oh spirit... This “Old Turncoat” ... this “Viejo Vendido” fellow is dead and they can only laugh? However wicked, however cruel he may have been, was there no one that cared for him? No one to shed a tear? La Muerte, if you are determined to show me death then show the sadness that should accompany it!

Scene shift.

Scene 13
The Cratchits Part II

The Roberto family without Roberto and Tiny Tim. Mrs. Cratchit is sewing. Pedro reading bible.

PEDRO (reading)

“And taking a child, he set him in the midst of them saying ‘Whosoever ...receibeth? a child in my name also receibeth me”?

MRS. CRATCHIT (gently correcting)

“No, Pedro. ‘receiveth me.’ ‘Whosoever receiveth a child in my name also receiveth me.’ (to herself) Receiveth a child...

She begins to break down, Pedro puts hand on her shoulder.

MRS. CRATCHIT

It is the color. It hurts mis ojos. It makes them weak by candlelight. (to them all) And I don’t want to have tired eyes when papá comes home. (to Pedro) It must be time by now?

PEDRO

Past time, mamá. But I think he walks slower since...

MRS. CRATCHIT

Sí, Pedro. He walks slower. He would walk quickly... very quickly with Tiny Tim on his shoulder.

BELINDA

Caminaba muy rápido carrying Pequeñito.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Sí Belinda. He was light to carry. No trouble for your papá.

Enter Roberto.

CRATCHIT

Feliz Navidad.

Various

Feliz Navidad, hola papá, etc.

ROBERTO

Hoy hice buen tiempo. (To Mrs. Cratchit) I wish you could have seen it... Where he rests... Estaba hermoso. But you will see it. I promised we would go cada domingo – every Sunday. (Begins to cry) My child. Mi niño. Mi Pequeñito.

MRS. CRATCHIT (comforting him)

Roberto. Pedro is working on his Inglés. He has been practicing.

ROBERTO (recovering)

Ah muy bien. How is your English coming, Pedro?

PEDRO

Muy bien, papá. Very good.

ROBERTO

Ah! Speaking of Pedro's English, coming home, I ran into Federico - Sobrino del señor Scrooge. I barely know him. But he saw that I was... um... Triste?

PEDRO

Sad, Papá.

ROBERTO

Sí! A little sad. When I tell him... what happened, he said "Lo siento mucho por ti y tu buena esposa."

MRS. CRATCHIT

He seems kind, Roberto.

ROBERTO

Then he asked about our familia. Pedro, I told him how you are learning Inglés. He give me this (takes out a card) and said if you come see him, he will help you find work en el norte - across the river.

MRS. CRATCHIT

Pedro, do you hear?

PEDRO

A real job?

ROBERTO

Sí. I think so.

BELINDA

Entonces Pedro se va a ir al norte pronto?

MRS. CRATCHIT

He will move when he is ready, Belinda.

ROBERTO

Sí, Belinda. Pedro will leave when he is ready and you will you too.

BELINDA

No Papá!

ROBERTO

Sí, Belinda, cuando estés lista. Familia, wherever we go, whenever we go, we will remember Tiny Tim, sí?

All

Sí Papá, yes, sí Roberto, etc.

MRS. CRATCHIT

And though he was only a child, we will remember how kind he was. And how patient.

ROBERTO

And this memory will make us strong. Una familia fuerte.

All

Sí Papá, sí Roberto, etc.

ROBERTO

Then I am happy. Estoy muy muy feliz. (Roberto and family embrace)

Cratchits exiting.

SCROOGE

Espíritu de la muerte, no más. No more, I beg you! Remove me from this place!

Scene 14
The Graveyard

Scene shift back in the graveyard from the prologue.

SCROOGE

Spirit, this is a fearful place. Tengo miedo.

Bell as prologue. Funeral procession enters.

SCROOGE

La Muerte, a quién...? what man... do they carry?

Spirit gestures to headstone.

SCROOGE

Entiendo. You wish me to look, and I would if I could, but I have not the power, Espíritu. No puedo.

Spirit gestures again.

SCROOGE

Before I draw nearer to that grave, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that will be, or are they shadows of the things that may be, only? ¡Respóndeme! ¿Por qué mostrarme esto si no hay esperanza?

Spirit gestures again.

SCROOGE

¡Respóndeme!

The stone is exposed.

SCROOGE

Ebenezer Scrooge!!! No! No! No! No! No!

Ghost dance into scene change to Scrooge's bedroom.

Scene 15
Christmas Day

SCROOGE (continuing)

No! No! No! No! No!

Scrooge's cries give way to church bells. He looks up.

SCROOGE

What's this? Where am I? My blanket! My pillow! My bed!!! Estoy en mi casa! (Moving about the space) Here is the place where Mother Superior came to me. And this is where I first met Christmas Present. And here... here is where Jacob Marley stood.

Moving down and calling.

SCROOGE

Jacob? Jacob? Jacob Marley, if you can hear me, I say thank you! I say it on my knees Jacob! (Kneeling) Gracias Jacob por una segunda oportunidad. I will not waste this second chance.

Jumping to his feet.

SCROOGE

What to do first? I don't know what time it is. I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. I don't know what day it is! I don't know anything! Why I'm quite a baby! Espere! Espere, I've got it!

He runs to the window and yells out.

SCROOGE

Hello there, lad!

ESTEBAN

Qué?

SCROOGE

Hola, amigo!

ESTEBAN

Hola, señor.

SCROOGE

What day is it, young lad?

ESTEBAN
Qué?

SCROOGE
¿Qué día es?

ESTEBAN
¿Hoy? ¡Es Navidad!

SCROOGE
¿Qué?

ESTEBAN
¡Na-vi-dad!

SCROOGE (to himself)
Navidad? Christmas Day! I haven't missed it. But it can't be! I was gone so long. The spirits have done it all in one night? Well of course they did. They can do anything they want. They're spirits after all!

ESTEBAN
Señor?

SCROOGE
¿Cuál es tu nombre, buen chico?

ESTEBAN
Esteban, Señor.

SCROOGE
Esteban! (to himself) A delightful boy! A pleasure to speak with him. (to Esteban) Listen, young fellow. Right by the bridge, there are three shops all in a row - the butcher, the candle maker, and the piñata store. Do you know them?

ESTEBAN
No entiendo Señor.

SCROOGE
Oh yes, of course! ¿Conoces la carnicería y la tienda de velas y la tienda de piñatas?

ESTEBAN
¿Las tres tiendas por el puente? Sí Señor.

SCROOGE (to himself)

He knows the shops! An intelligent lad! (to Esteban) Esteban, I need your help with three things. ¿Me ayudarás con tres cosas?

ESTEBAN

Creo que sí.

SCROOGE (To himself)

What first? The meat for the tamales. (to Esteban) Ve al carnicero y compra diez libras de carne para tamales.

ESTEBAN

Diez Libras?

SCROOGE

Next? Candles! (to Esteban) Ve al vendedor de velas y compra... mmm... Cincuenta velas.

ESTEBAN

¿Cincuenta?!?

SCROOGE

Is fifty not enough? You're right, better make it a hundred. Cien velas.

ESTEBAN

Cien.

SCROOGE

Finally, corre a la tienda de piñatas y compra la gran piñata que está colgando en la ventana.

ESTEBAN

La gran piñata - tan grande como yo?

SCROOGE (to himself)

The one as big as him. Charming! (to Esteban) Sí, amigo, sí! The one as big as you!

ESTEBAN (exiting)

Estás loco.

SCROOGE

Wait! Wait! ¡Espera! Lo digo en serio. Ve pronto y te doy un dólar.

ESTEBAN

¿De verdad?

SCROOGE

¡Hazlo rapidito y te daré cinco dólares!

ESTEBAN

¿Cinco dólares? Dios mío! Sí Señor! (exits)

SCROOGE (to himself)

Should I send Cratchit a note? No, no! He shouldn't know who sent it! That piñata is twice the size of Tiny Tim!

Scrooge sings a hymn and dances around his apartment changing clothes.

SCROOGE

No se what to do next! Wait! I'll go see Federico! (throwing on coat) Yes, yes, that's what I'll do. (stopping himself – clothes lazzi as he changes mind through this) No. No, I won't. He won't want to see me. Yes he will. No he won't. Yes. He will. I want to see him. I want to meet his esposa. I want to talk to them. I want... to... talk to people. I want to... go out! I've never felt this way before. I'm as alight as a feather. Tan alegre como un angel. I'm as merry as a schoolboy and as giddy as un borracho.

Knock on door.

SCROOGE

Come in!

Enter Esteban with carnicero with carne, vendedor de velas with basket of candles, and piñatero with huge piñata.

SCROOGE

Ah, the shopkeepers! Hola amigos!

CARNICERO and VENDEDOR DE VELAS

Hola. Buenos Días.

PIÑATERO

Feliz Navidad, señor.

SCROOGE

Feliz Navi- yes! Yes! It's Christmas day! Oh you spirits. You rascals! All in one night!

PIÑATERO (aside to Esteban)

¿Estará bien en la cabeza?

ESTEBAN (aside to piñatero)

Lo dudo.

SCROOGE

My friends, I assure you I am quite all right. Now then, conocen la casa de Roberto Cratchit?

PIÑATERO, CARNICERO, and VENDEDOR DE VELAS

Sí señor. Por supuesto. (etc)

SCROOGE (getting out his wallet)

Excellent! Por favor, lleven esta carne, estas velas, y esta piñata a la casa de Roberto Cratchit.

PIÑATERO

Pero señor, Nochebuena ya pasó.

SCROOGE

Yes, I know. Christmas Eve was yesterday, but better late than never. So help me, the Cratchits will have their piñata on Christmas Day.

PIÑATERO

Señor?

SCROOGE

Now here's what you will do. (as Scrooge gives instructions, he switches back and forth between the Piñatero, the Carnicero, and the Vendedor de Velas putting bills in their hands) You will take this wonderful, estupenda, colorida piñata, this rich, delectable, fresh carne, and these lustrous, glowing white candles and you will deliver them all to la casa de Roberto Cratchit. But you will not speak a word of who sends them. Entendido?

PIÑATERO

Umm...

SCROOGE

And you may keep the change, mis amigos.

CARNICERO

Keep the change?

VENDEDOR DE VELAS

Sí señor!! (They begin exiting) Vámonos! (to Scrooge) Para Roberto Cratchit. Gracias señor!

The three shopkeepers exit with Esteban following.

SCROOGE

Esteban! Buen trabajo, amigo. This is for you. (gives him money)

ESTEBAN

Gracias señor. Feliz Navidad! (exiting)

SCROOGE

Feliz Navidad, my boy! Feliz Navidad indeed!

Scrooge exits to street.

Scene 16
Christmas with Federico

Scrooge is traveling on the street. He greets everyone he meets with an enthusiastic “Merry Christmas” or “Feliz Navidad”. They mostly react with shock or wonder. Eventually Scrooge comes across the Undertaker and Sepulturero as the businessmen from Act 1, scene 1.

SCROOGE

Feliz Navidad, gentlemen.

Beat while they freeze.

SEPULTURERO (to Undertaker sotto voce)

Es el Viejo Vendido!

UNDERTAKER (also sotto voce)

Sí... Run! (They both begin a hasty exit)

SCROOGE

Wait, gentlemen, please. Yes, it is I. “Viejo Vendido”. “Old Turncoat”. I know that you call me these names, and I can hardly blame you. I have earned them.

UNDERTAKER

Well, sir-

SCROOGE

No, no. No explanation needed. I hope you will pardon my behavior yesterday.

UNDERTAKER (reluctantly)

I suppose there’s no need to hold a grudge on Christmas day is there, sir?

SCROOGE

Indeed not. Do you have your pledge book and a pen?

Undertaker nudges Sepulturero who has turned away. Sepulturero grudgingly hands the book to Undertaker who passes it to Scrooge.

SCROOGE (writing as he speaks)

Now then, starting today and on the first of every month, I, Ebenezer Scrooge, pledge to give... let’s see... I think (writing the amount) this is about right. And I sign my name... here. And we have a contract. (handing book back) Thank you gentlemen.

Some schtick here with first Undertaker and then Sepulturero looking at the book and reacting to the amount.

UNDERTAKER

Mr. Scrooge... Are you certain?

SCROOGE

I am, and not a peso less. There are a great many back-payments included in that amount, I promise you.

UNDERTAKER (shaking Scrooge's hand)

I don't know what to say.

SCROOGE

Don't say anything. Just... come and see me. Will you... come and see me?

UNDERTAKER

Umm...

SEPULTURERO (stepping forward and shaking Scrooge's hand)

Sí, señor Scrooge. We will come and see you. Dios lo bendiga, señor Scrooge.

SCROOGE

Gracias. Y Feliz Navidad. Feliz Navidad to both of you, Gentlemen!

They go their separate ways bringing Scrooge to the door of Federico and Catherine. Scrooge knocks and Catherine answers.

CATHERINE (off)

I'll get it!

CATHERINE

Hello?

SCROOGE

Hello, young lady. I am your Uncle Scrooge.

CATHERINE (fear)

Ah! The Cucuí!

SCROOGE

No, please don't be frightened-

FEDERICO (off)

Who is at the door my dear?

CATHERINE

It's your Uncle Scrooge.

FEDERICO

What's that? My tío Scrooge? Humbug! (enters and sees Scrooge) Oh! Oh... my...

SCROOGE

Hello nephew.

FEDERICO

Tío.

SCROOGE

I've come to accept your invitation to dinner. May I... may I... come in?

A look between Scrooge and Catherine.

FEDERICO (shaking his hand)

Tío... Tío!

Undertaker and Sepulturero step forward.

SEPULTURERO

Federico casi le arranca el brazo.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge had a wonderful Christmas with his nephew; A wonderful party...

SEPULTURERO

Juegos maravillosos...

UNDERTAKER

Wonderful food...

SEPULTURERO

Una familia acogedora, y mucho cariño.

Scene 17
Fooling Cratchit

During the following, scene shifts into counting house.

UNDERTAKER

And the next morning?

SEPULTURERO

Oh, Scrooge was early para el trabajo the next morning.

UNDERTAKER

He was determined to be there first and catch Roberto Cratchit coming late!

Scrooge seated at his desk. Roberto enters at a run and attempts to sit unnoticed.

SCROOGE

Mr. Cratchit! What do you mean skulking in here this time of day?

ROBERTO

Perdóneme, señor Scrooge. Se me hizo un poquito tarde.

SCROOGE

I should say you were late, Mr. Cratchit! The day is half spent.

ROBERTO

Sí señor. Había mucha comida y Champurrado y Rompopo... Y una piñata muy grande...

SCROOGE

I'm not interested in your excuses, Mr. Cratchit! You think you can just breeze into this office at all hours of the day?

ROBERTO

No jefe!

SCROOGE

I'm not going to tolerate this kind of recalcitrant indolence a moment longer!

ROBERTO

Disculpe?

SCROOGE

Therefore I'm going to... I'm going to... I'm going to.....

ROBERTO
Por favor...

SCROOGE
Raise your salary!

ROBERTO
Qué?!?

SCROOGE
Merry Christmas my good man. A merrier Christmas than I've given you for many years. I'm going to raise your salary, and if you'll have it, I'm going to endeavor to help your struggling family, and most importantly, we are going to get the very best care for Tiny Tim that money can buy.

ROBERTO
De veras, señor?

SCROOGE
Ah! Vamos a llevar a Pequeñito al mejor doctor.

ROBERTO
Un doctor para Tiny Tim?

SCROOGE
Sí, Roberto. Now take the rest of the day off and join me tonight in the cantina where we will discuss your affairs over hearty mugs of rompopo!

ROBERTO
More rompopo? Sí jefe! Gracias jefe!

Starts to exit than returns.

ROBERTO (offering his hand)
Merry Christmas, Mister Scrooge.

SCROOGE (shaking hands)
Feliz Navidad, Roberto.

Roberto Exits.

Epilogue

Ghost Dancers enter and place hat down center as if carried by wind. Scrooge comes downstage and picks it up.

SCROOGE

Ah! Now, where have you been? Mantendré la Navidad en mi corazón durante todo el año. Nunca más volveré a abandonar mi familia y a mi comunidad. Christmas past, present, and future, the spirits of all three shall strive in me to the end of my days.

Company enters.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge was better than his word. He did everything he promised.

SEPULTURERO

Sí, hizo todo que prometió y mucho más.

UNDERTAKER

He became as good a friend...

SEPULTURERO

As good a jefe...

UNDERTAKER

and as good a man...

SEPULTURERO

as the good old city knew.

Tiny Tim enters without crutch

TINY TIM

Señor Scrooge!

SCROOGE

Tim, hijo!

Tiny Tim runs to Scrooge

SEPULTURERO

And to Tiny Tim era como un niño... (Scrooge puts Tiny Tim on his shoulder) A second father.

UNDERTAKER

Scrooge had no more meetings with ghosts or spirits. And it was always said of him...

SEPULTURERO

...that he understood the true meaning of Christmas. Él vivió todos los días con el espíritu Navideño.

UNDERTAKER

May that truly be said of us.

SEPULTURERO

All of us... So, en las palabras de Tiny Tim, "Que Dios nos bendiga."

SCROOGE

God Bless Us... A todos.

TINY TIM

God Bless Us... Everyone.