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

Stratton, Jay
Dominguez, Adriana
Department of Theatre and Dance
University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso
Texas
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 it’s 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.


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.


Don Peluche:  *Also plays Christmas Present*. A bombastic older Mexican businessman. 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.


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.


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 arrebataba.

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

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.
Viente 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.
NÚMERO TRES. SÍ SEÑOR.

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

ROBERTO

Good afternoon, señores.

UNDEARTAKER

Good afternoon.

SEPULTURERO

Buenas tardes.

SCROOGE

Can I help you gentlemen?

UNDEARTAKER

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

SCROOGE

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

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.

UNDEARTAKER

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

*Marley’s face disappears.*

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

Scrooge got to his feet, and examined la puerta.

But finding nothing amiss...

Bah.

Scrooge enters his house.

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

Las paredes estaban vacías.

The furniture was old and drab...

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

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...

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

SEPULTURERO
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
Ebenezzer 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.
You don’t believe in me.

I don’t.

Why do you doubt your senses?

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)

OOOOOOOOaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhh!!! 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.

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

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.

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

Business?!? Mankind was my business! The common welfare was my business! Charity, mercy, generosity, and benevolence all should have been my business!

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.*

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


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?
ESPERANZA
Ebenezer! Vengo a llevarte a casa.

BOY SCROOGE
Mi casa, Esperanza?

ESPERANZA
Sí Ebenezer! A casa.

BOY SCROOGE
But papá...

ESPERANZA
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!!

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

ESPERANZA
Feliz Navidad, Ebenezer.

Exit Boy Scrooge and Esperanza.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
A tiny girl con un gran corazón.

SCROOGE
Sí... yes.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
She died a young woman, and had children?

SCROOGE
One child.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
Your nephew, Federico, sí?

SCROOGE
Sí.
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? Hmmm... 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 rompope.

DON PELUCHE
Así 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.

Benito.

Beat.

BELLA

Feliz Navidad, Bella.

Feliz Navidad, Benito.

Beat.

YOUNG SCROOGE

Es un vestido muy hermoso.

Gracias, Benito.

Beat.

BELLA

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?

¿Cuál es el problema cariño?

DON 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
Shhh!

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... necessario.  

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

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 ¿Habrá 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?

Who do you think I am?

Saint Nicholas?

If you like.

Papa Noel?

Si tú prefieres.

Beat.

Santa Claus?

...Really?

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, olvídaló. 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
Shhhhh!

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!
Feliz Navidad!

Merry Christmas, Papá!

Pedro, tu Inglés sounds muy bien.

I have been practicing, Papá!

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

I was worried about you, Beto.

Nos quedamos para la posada.

Y comimos dulces.

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

Solo uno...

Roberto...

Dos?

¡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
Niño 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!

What?

SCROOGE

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 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!
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.

Spirit. The little boy.

Tiny Tim?

Yes. Will he live?

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.

No. Say he will live!

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

Spirit, do not turn my words against me.

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!

Where to now, spirit?

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?
Both! Two questions, two answers!

Una pregunta a la vez.

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

Sí... again.

“again”.

¿Es un animal?

Sí!

Un animal manso?

No.

So a mean animal?

Sí!

A rattlesnake?

No.

Un animal feroz?

Sí!
A tiger!

A wildcat?

No.

A bear?

No.

¿Un gallo?

All respond.

A chicken?

¡Los gallos son malos!

No!

Does this animal grunt?

Sí.

A pig!

Un jabalí.

No.
Does it snort?  
Catheriné  
Sí.  
Federico  

A bull!  
Catheriné  
No.  
Federico  

A rhinoceros!  
Percy  
No!  
Federico  

A buffalo?  
Scrooge  

Does this animal live in a zoo?  
Catheriné  
Excellent question!  
Scrooge  
No.  
Federico  

¿En la jungla?  
Jorge  
No.  
Federico  

¿En las montañas?  
Jorge  
No.  
Federico  

In the ocean??  
Jorge
FEDERICO
No. No. No!
PERCY
In the desert?
FEDERICO
No… y sí.
All respond in various curious ways.
ROSE
Wait! ¿Este animal vive en nuestra ciudad?
SCROOGE
Oh, in our city! Very good!
FEDERICO
Sí!
All respond ah, oh, yes, etc.
PERCY
Does it prowl the streets?
FEDERICO
Sí.
SCROOGE
A dog! A dog!
ROSE
Un perro.
JORGE
Un gato!
FEDERICO
Not a dog OR a cat!
SCROOGE
A rat! A rat!
CATHERINE
A pickpocket?
...well...

PERCY

A thief.

FEDERICO

No.

ROSE

Un policía

FEDERICO

No!

JORGE

¿El Cucuí?

_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._

SCROOGE

Well?

FEDERICO

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

_Some teasing of Jorge._

ROSE

¡Lo sé! ¡Lo tengo! I have it! I have it!
¿Qué? ¿Qué?

Yes! What? What?

Is it Federico’s Tío - Ebenezer Scrooge?

Sí!!

What???

All react, laughing and celebrating.

Espera! Espera! Not fair!

Why?

I guessed El Cucuí!

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

Bah!

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.

Oh 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


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

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 … receiveth? a child in my name also receiveth me’?”

MRS. CRATCHIT (gently correcting)
“No, Pedro. ‘receiveth me.’ ‘Whoseover 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 hace 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?

¿Qué día es?

¿Hoy? ¡Es Navidad!

¿Qué?

¡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?

¿Cuál es tu nombre, buen chico?

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

ESTEBAN
¿De verdad?
¡Hazlo rapidito y te daré cinco dólares!

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

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.

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 lazi 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.

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

Ah, the shopkeepers! Hola amigos!

Hola. Buenos Días.

Feliz Navidad, señor.

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

¿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…

Hello nephew.

SCROOGE
Tío.

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.

UNDEARTAKER
Scrooge had a wonderful Christmas with his nephew; A wonderful party…

SEPULTURERO
Juegos maravillosos…

UNDEARTAKER
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 Rompope... 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.......
Por favor...

ROBERTO

Raise your salary!

SCROOGE

Qué?!?

ROBERTO

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.

SCROOGE

De veras, señor?

ROBERTO

Ah! Vamos a llevar a Pequeñito al mejor doctor.

SCROOGE

Un doctor para Tiny Tim?

ROBERTO

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 rompope!

SCROOGE

More rompope? Sí jefe! Gracias jefe!

ROBERTO

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.

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

SEPULTURERO
Sí, hizo todo que prometió y mucho más.

UNDEARTAKER
He became as good a friend...

SEPULTURERO
As good a jefe...

UNDEARTAKER
and as good a man...

SEPULTURERO
as the good old city knew.

Tiny Tim enters without crutch

TINY TIM
Señor Scrooge!

SCROOGE
Tim, mijo!

Tiny Tim runs to Scrooge

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

UNDEARTAKER
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.

UNDEARTAKER
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.