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About Neptune Theatre TourCo



An integral part of Neptune Theatre, TourCo visits over seventy schools annually, and has brought theatre for young people to thousands of students all over Nova Scotia. This year we are venturing back into schools, while continuing to share our fantastic digital content.

A Message From Laura Caswell, Director of Education



We are thrilled to be returning to schools in Nova Scotia. **Neptune TourCo** had to shift to digital presentations with the Covid-19 pandemic, but we are back bigger and better than ever!

As part of our Digital Package, the first option seemed obvious: the delightful and popular *Dickens' A Christmas Carol*! A masterclass in acting and character work, as well as a beautiful introduction to puppetry and non-verbal theatre, this show is not only entertaining, it is inherently full of lessons - in theatre and in life.

We hope this study guide will help you implement discussions, group exercises and student reflection into your classroom. We are passionate about the arts in the education of young people, and no barrier can stop us from doing this work.

Laura Caswell
Director of Education
Producer of TourCo

A message from Jeremy Webb, Artistic Director



Welcome to a very different version of the long-running *Dickens' A Christmas Carol*. I first created this show in 2003, and went on to perform it myself nearly 700 times for 13 years. Rhys took over a number of years ago and it's still going strong!

I am thrilled that despite the pandemic, we managed to find a way to bring you the show. *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens is a classic holiday story. I hope that by watching the show and working through the activities in this study guide you can work out what makes this story so popular after all these years of it being told.

The story of Scrooge and company has been told on stage (as plays and musicals), on the radio, on television, and on film. Of course it all started with a book. Dickens wrote a story of such imagination, fun, heartbreak and hope, that centuries later we are still talking about it.

Thanks for participating in this tradition. I hope you have a lot of Humbug!

Jeremy Webb
Writer & director of Dickens' A Christmas Carol
Artistic Director of Neptune Theatre

About the Play

This may seem like a movie - but it's not! What you are watching is a play which has been performed live for an audience for almost two decades!

Jeremy Webb's adaptation of *Dickens' A Christmas Carol* is a memorable story about the true spirit of Christmas.

This show has been a longstanding holiday tradition in the theatre scene in Halifax since premiering in 2003. It has also been toured across the province and into the United States to critical acclaim.



Based on the book by Charles Dickens, this play takes us through the day before Christmas as we meet Ebenezer Scrooge and other characters. Scrooge does not believe in celebrating the holidays and on Christmas eve is met by a series of ghosts who take him on journeys through time to reflect upon his life - past, present and future.

Will Scrooge change his mind? Will he find joy? How is his way of life affecting others?

You will have to watch the play to find out!

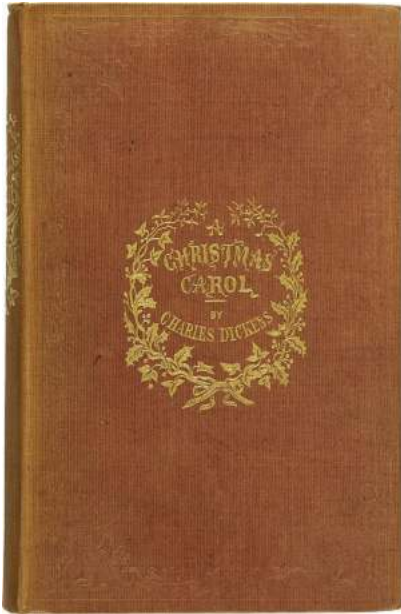
Use this study guide to help you keep track of what you learn along the way.

About Charles Dickens

- Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, United Kingdom (England) on February 7th 1812, and lived until June 9th 1870. As a child he lived in poor circumstances in a "two up two down" four-roomed house that he shared with his parents and five siblings.
- Like Peter Cratchit, young Charles - the eldest boy - was often sent to pawn the family's goods when money was tight. Also, like many poor families, the Dickens' had nothing in which to roast meat. They relied on the ovens of their local baker which were available on Sundays and Christmas when the bakery was closed.
- Charles loved to read growing up. At a young age, he was forced to leave school to work at a warehouse. This became the foundation of his interest in the reform of socio-economic and labour conditions.
- Charles did not have a formal education, yet he is regarded as one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian Era.
- In his 20's he enjoyed mimicry and popular entertainment, lacked a clear, specific sense of what he wanted to become, and yet knew he wanted fame and was drawn to theatre.
- Dickens toured England and the US reading his works aloud to as many as 35,000 people at a time. *A Christmas Carol* was always a crowd pleaser.

- [The Ghost Club](#) was founded in London in 1862, and after initially receiving some light-hearted ridicule in the press, Charles Dickens joined the club, lending it a degree of respectability. The club discussed and investigated ghosts and paranormal activities. After Dickens' death in 1870 the club seemed to have dissolved. It enjoyed a resurgence in the early 1880s and [is still in existence today](#).
-

About the book



A Christmas Carol was the most successful book of the 1843 holiday season. By Christmas it sold six thousand copies and it continued to be popular into the new year.

Dickens paid the publishing costs himself, ordering lavish binding, gilt edging, and hand-colored illustrations. Despite the high quality packaging, he set the price at 5 shillings so that everyone could afford it. This combination resulted in disappointingly low profits despite high sales. More copies were ordered after the first printing was sold in only five days.

Dickens was involved in charities and social issues throughout his entire life. At the time that he wrote *A Christmas Carol* he was very concerned with impoverished children who turned to crime and delinquency in order to survive. Dickens, as well as others, thought that education could provide a way to a better life for these children. He also wrote the popular

novels *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*, as well as others, which demonstrate stories of social injustices and classicism.

FUN FACT

The line "Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail." appears toward the beginning of the novel after it came to him in a dream

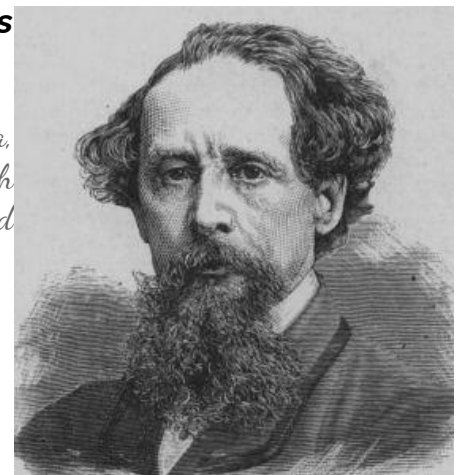
Charles Dickens began work on *A Christmas Carol* in October of 1843. The story was published on December 19, 1843, meaning it only took him about six weeks to write!!

Here is what Dickens had this to say about *A Christmas Carol*:

I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.

Their faithful Friend and Servant,

- C. D.



About this adaptation

Jeremy Webb adapted the book into this play in 2003.

He took the book and read it a number of times before deciding which bits to include and which to leave out. That process took about two weeks.

Jeremy then took this rough script into a rehearsal hall and tried it out, on its feet, seeing how he could play all the characters. He approached a few people to help make the puppets. The puppets have changed a few times over the past 17 years.



Rhys Bevan-John, along with Bill Wood, were part of the show during the first year it was performed, operating the puppets. The show performed for two weeks and was a surprising success.

Since then, the show has been seen nearly 700 times (in this form), and Rhys and Jeremy are not the only actors to have performed it. In 2019 a theatre in Sudbury got permission from Jeremy to produce their

own version.

"The show is really based on the book, says Jeremy Webb. "But I was also keen to perform it in my own style. Lots of comedy, lots of audience participation and lots of character switching."

"I worked out how each character in the play would talk and walk and feel," he explains. "Then got faster and faster at having these people talk to each other, jumping from one voice to another!"

Dickens' A Christmas Carol has performed in hundreds of schools and theatres since 2003. The team would travel in a big truck to a school, unload the set & props, set it all up in 90 minutes, do the show (75 mins) and then pack away (45 mins) before driving to the next venue.

Many people have contributed to the longevity and success of this show. We would like to acknowledge them here. For seventeen years the show has benefitted from the incredible cumulative contribution of these people: Sylvia Bell, Jessica Lewis, Simon Henderson, Jamie Bradley, Rhys Bevan-John, Bill Wood, Sarah English, Jeff Schwager, Kristin Langille, Justin Dakai, Julie Martell, Haywood Parrott, Scott MacMillan, Helena Marriott, Alison Muir, Jesse Matthews, and many more.



Catchphrase & Script

“Bah! Humbug!”

This is the popular catchphrase said by Ebenezer Scrooge.

He usually says this when he is **ANGRY** or wants people to leave him alone.

ACTING EXERCISE:

Try saying “Bah! Humbug!” like Ebenezer!

Other characters you can try:

“Oh Uncle” as Fred

“God Bless Us Everyone” as Tiny Tim

“Good Morning Mr Scrooge” Mrs Dilber

“Know me better man!” Ghost of Christmas Present

Are there any other lines you liked from the play? Or do you want to create a catchphrase from your favourite character?

FUN FACT: Lines of text in a play are called the script. An actor refers to their words in the script as their “lines”. In order to rehearse, an actor will “learn their lines”, and in rehearsal if they forget their words they call out “line!” The stage manager will give them a prompt to get them back on track.

For more quotes:

<https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/quote-title/a-christmas-carol/>

Themes:

A *Christmas Carol* continues to be relevant, sending a message that cuts through the materialistic trappings of the season and gets to the heart and soul of the holidays.

Some themes include:

Family

Celebration

Tradition

Self Reflection

Poverty

Social injustice

Redemption

Past, present, and future

Greed

Generosity

Forgiveness

Kindness



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zg8qfrd/revision/2>

<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/a-christmas-carol/themes>

Write or draw examples of how these themes are explored in the play:

FAMILY/JOY	SADNESS/LONELINESS	GREED/INJUSTICE

Theatre Etiquette

Though you're watching this performance digitally. It's important to practice theatre etiquette when viewing any type of production.

Be respectful, wait to ask questions, and be attentive. Listening with your whole body is the best way to do this.

In addition, make sure that your cell phone, or anything that makes noise, is on "Do Not Disturb" for the length of the show. It is also strictly prohibited to record or photograph any aspect of most live productions.



Meet the Cast & Crew

For full biographical information go to our program: [Neptune Program](#)

ACTORS:



Rhys Bevan John

plays Scrooge, as well as many other characters



Simon Henderson

is the puppeteer and plays minor rolls

Julia Topple appears as the face of Belle

Julie Martell is the voice of Belle

CREATIVE TEAM:



Jessica Lewis

did the lighting design and is the stage manager



Terrence Taylor

is the director of photography/editor of the film

Jeremy Webb is the director and writer of the play

Scott MacMillan is the composer of music

OTHER TECHNICAL ROLES:

Harmony Adesola is videographer for "Belle"

Shawn Bisson is the technical director

Garrett Barker is the lighting operator

Jordan Palmer is the sound operator/editor

Michael Erwin is the production manager

Koumbie is the associate producer

Jessica Lewis is the stage manager

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES:

Emily Richards is head of marketing

Gabrielle Jeannotte is graphic designer

Lisa Bugden is general manager

Leslie MacDonald is director of development

Tom Krzyski is financial controller

Krystle MacNeill is payroll manager

Julia Topple is theatre school and tourco administrator

Laura Caswell is director of education



Illustration by John Leech; Marley's Ghost

Essential Non-Performing Roles in a Production

Stage Manager: The Stage Manager of the show is responsible for “calling the show” - which means allowing for different “cues” to happen. These cues could be a change in lighting, playing a sound effect, or running a special visual effect. The Stage Manager acts as the “captain of the ship” during a live show. They are responsible for who and what are coming on and off stage. The Stage Manager for this play was also the lighting designer, Jessica Lewis.

Front of House/House Manager: The folks who scan your ticket, show you to your seat, or sometimes sell you a snack, are known as the front of house staff. The “house” is the audience. The Front of House Manager is somewhat like the Stage Manager for the audience; they are in charge of getting everyone through the door, to their seats, and then call the stage manager backstage to let them know when it's OK to start the show!

Box Office: The people at the box office are those who sell you your ticket to the show. Whether you call them in advance or buy a ticket that night, they keep track of who's coming to the show, and sell as many tickets as they can!

Marketing: The marketing team is one that works out-of-view of an audience member. Their job is very important, because they need to inform the community what show is happening, and when it's happening. Without marketing the show, no one will know to come! This team is often responsible for social media, as well as organizing media events (radio, TV, advertisements) to promote the show!



Illustration by Quentin Blake; A Christmas Carol



Illustration by Ronald Searle; A Christmas Carol

THINGS TO CONSIDER AS YOU WATCH THE SHOW....

Creating the Show

- How is this story different from the original book?
- How is this play similar or different to other versions of this story you have seen?
- How does the actor become "Scrooge"?



Performance Elements

- What is your favourite part of the show?
 - What most surprised you about this play?
-
- How does physicality enhance the story?
 - How does puppetry enhance the story?

A Play vs Movie

- If you were to make a movie of this story, what would yours look like?
- What other movie characters remind you of Ebenezer Scrooge?



[The Internet Movie Database](https://www.imdb.com/) lists more than 100 actors who have portrayed Scrooge, the famous Dickensian miser. Some of the best are pictured here. *Which one is your favourite?*

*content found via <https://www.charlesdickenspage.com/charles-dickens-christmas.html>



[Lionel Barrymore](#)



[Reginald Owen](#)



[Alistair Sim](#)



[Mister Magoo](#)



[Albert Finney](#)



[Scrooge McDuck](#)



[George C. Scott](#)



[Bill Murray](#)



[Michael Caine](#)



[Patrick Stewart](#)



[Kelsey Grammer](#)



[Jim Carrey](#)

The 'Look' of the Show

(Scenic, Lighting, & Puppetry Design)

This production offers three very cool and interesting aspects of theatrical design throughout the production. As you're watching, pay attention to the...

SET: Everything you see on stage that is physically built and constructed. Props also fall under the "scenic design" category.

How do they use the stage, furniture, and props to create different settings?

LIGHTING: How is the space lit? Lighting sets the mood and setting for the play. Every colour, shadow, and lighting aspect you see is a choice made by a designer.

How is lighting used to enhance the story?



PUPPETRY: Puppets are a special aspect of design for this show! Think about how they work, and how they affect the story, as well as fit the overall design of the show.

How are the puppets used to enhance the story and build new characters?

How do the technical elements of the show work with one another?

Characters

There are over 30 characters who appear in this play. Here is a list of some of them:

- **The Narrator** is the actor playing a neutral character who is telling the story, perhaps he is Charles Dickens.
- **Ebenezer Scrooge** is the main character of the story. We watch as he transforms from a miser whose only interest is money into a man who values Christmas and its lessons.
- **Belle** was engaged to Scrooge at one time. She broke off the engagement when she noticed a change in him.
- **Bob Cratchit** is Scrooge's employee and the father of Tiny Tim. Bob lives with his wife and six children in a four-room house.
- **Mrs. Cratchit** is the wife of Bob Cratchit.
- **Martha Cratchit** is the eldest daughter of Bob and Mrs. Cratchit. She works as a milliner (a hat maker).
- **Peter Cratchit** is the eldest son of Bob and Mrs. Cratchit.
- **Tiny Tim Cratchit** is the youngest son of Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's employee. Tiny Tim uses a crutch and is unwell, but always has high spirits.
- **Fan** was Scrooge's younger sister and the mother of Fred.
- **Mr. Fezziwig** was Scrooge's employer when he was younger. Scrooge was his apprentice.
- **Fred** is the nephew of Ebenezer Scrooge and the son of Scrooge's sister, Fan.
- **Ghost of Christmas Past** shows Scrooge scenes from Christmases in the past.
- **Ghost of Christmas Present** shows Scrooge scenes of the current Christmas.
- **Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come** is a frightening figure who shows Scrooge scenes from Christmases in the future.
- **Jacob Marley** was the business partner of Ebenezer Scrooge.



FUN ACTIVITIES

Helpful Internet links:

- <https://time.com/4597964/history-charles-dickens-christmas-carol/>
- <https://www.charlesdickenspage.com/charles-dickens-christmas.html>
- <https://www.charlesdickenspage.com/charles-dickens-a-christmas-carol.html>
- <https://www.charlesdickenspage.com/carol-dickens-reading-text.html>
- <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/christmas-carol/>
- <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/christmas-carol/characters-from-a-christmas-carol/>
- <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/christmas-carol/trivia/>

[Click Here to Ask Scrooge a Yes or No question](#)



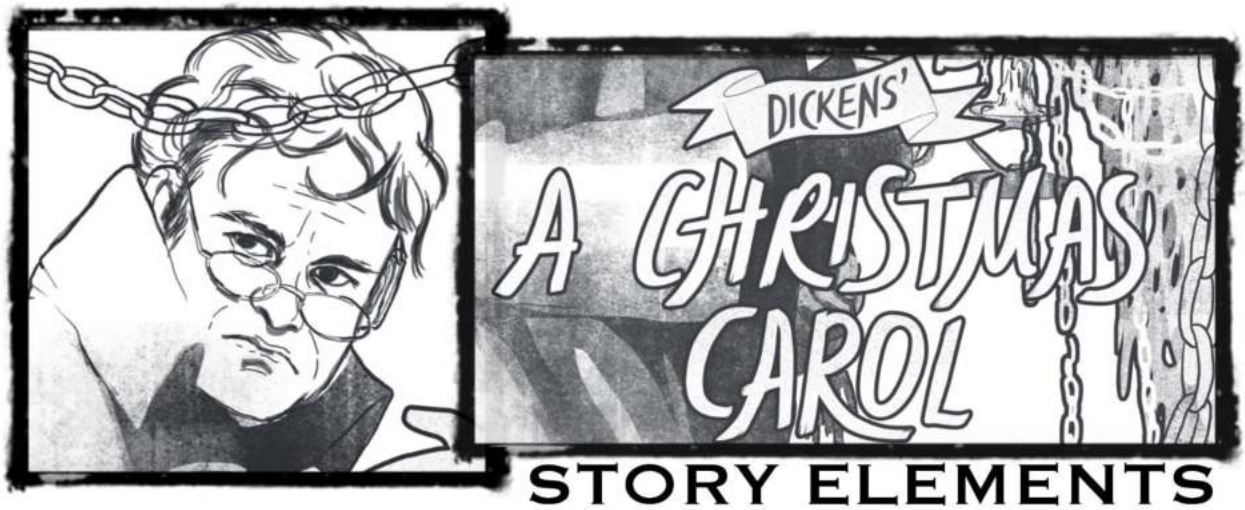
Christmas Carol Quiz



If you were to write a holiday story what would it be about? Is there an existing book or movie that you would base it on?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Draw what your holiday story would look like:



WHO?

How many characters does the actor in the play portray? Write down all the names of the roles he plays:

How else are characters portrayed in these scenes? (for example: puppets, video, voiceover) Write down the names of the other characters we meet in this play:

TOURCO

WHEN & WHERE?

WHAT?

List all the settings in the in the play (locations and times in history):

What themes are present in this chapter?

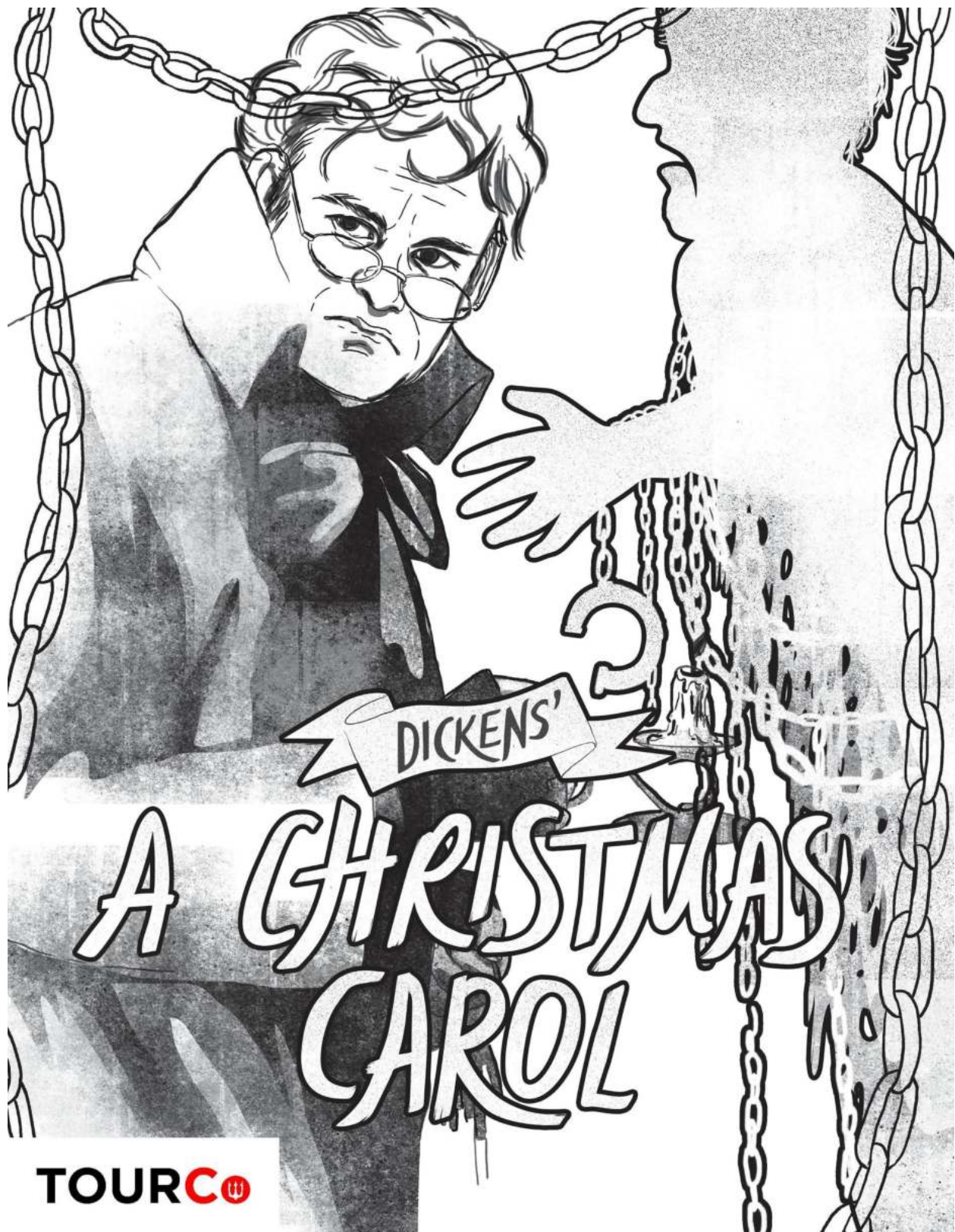
How can you relate to them?

A Christmas Carol Word Search

N	M	P	E	A	N	P	N	B	E	L	L	E	E
O	P	H	S	C	R	O	O	G	E	E	O	I	G
I	T	U	U	Y	H	C	D	D	R	I	Y	E	H
T	I	M	N	R	A	N	E	N	O	T	C	C	O
P	H	B	I	M	I	R	T	O	O	P	G	P	S
M	C	U	U	T	F	E	R	E	H	L	U	R	T
E	T	G	S	I	Z	H	P	O	O	G	G	P	S
D	A	E	I	T	O	F	E	Z	Z	I	W	I	G
E	R	M	A	R	L	E	Y	A	L	P	H	H	G
R	C	M	I	T	Y	N	I	T	G	E	A	Z	W
A	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	A	N	S	R
O	U	T	T	R	I	E	N	U	T	P	E	N	U
I	O	H	I	L	C	L	I	D	R	E	S	D	Z
F	T	E	P	P	U	P	L	F	B	D	F	N	E

TINYTIM
 BELLE
 PLAY
 LONDON
 FEZZIWIG
 FRED
 CHRISTMAS
 CRATCHIT
 NEPTUNE
 MARLEY
 GHOSTS
 REDEMPTION
 PUPPET
 SCROOGE
 HUMBUG





Thank you for joining us in our first ever digital tour of *Dickens' A Christmas Carol*!

*Wishing you a happy and safe holiday
season!*



If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback do not hesitate to contact us at
school@neptunetheatre.com

902-222-8863

A huge round of applause to our sponsors!

