The 28th Annual
A CHRISTMAS CAROL WRITING CONTEST
2016
The Twenty-Eighth Annual “A Christmas Carol” Writing Contest

Every year since 1989, Great Lakes Theater has partnered with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District in producing our annual “A Christmas Carol” writing contest. Over two thousand CMSD students per year, in grades six, seven, and eight compose original stories inspired by the universal themes in Charles Dickens’ timeless classic. Then, each school selects one winner per grade level to submit to Great Lakes Theater for judging. Of these submissions, a panel of judges vote for the top six grand prize-winning entries.

Grand prize-winning student writers attend a reception attended by GLT staff, their teachers and CMSD representatives, where their achievement is celebrated and they receive awards of recognition. In addition, these students are interviewed by Dee Perry, host of WCPN 90.3 FM’s award-winning arts and culture program The Sound of Applause, and their stories read by members of the acting company from Great Lakes Theater’s production of A Christmas Carol, for broadcast on the program.

While their stories were edited for broadcast, these six grand prize-winning stories appear in this booklet unabridged. These 2016 grand prize stories are:

“A Christmas W(RAP)!!” by Roosevelt Wallace – page 2
Grade 6, Franklin D. Roosevelt Academy; Teacher: Gail Senior
Read by Jessie Cope Miller & Jonathan Dyrud

“The Empty Rocking Chair” by Deaarron King – page 3
Grade 8, Kenneth W. Clement Boys’ Leadership Academy; Teacher: Dr. Kevin O’Connell
Read by Lynn Robert Berg & Cassandra Bissel

“Another Lost Heart” by Kendall Skillern – page 5
Grade 7, Warner Girls’ Leadership Academy; Teacher: Shawn Sheridan
Read by Maggie Kettering

“How to Keep the Christmas Spirit in 2043” by Nina Abercrombie – page 6
Grade 8, Whitney M. Young Gifted & Talented Leadership Academy; Teacher: Carol Robinson
Read by Laura Welsh Berg, Cassandra Bissel & Jonathan Dyrud

“Twitter Updates; Tweets Being The Character Scrooge” by Mya Belton – page 12
Grade 6, Douglas MacArthur Girls’ Leadership Academy; Teacher: Michelle Lopez
Read by Lynn Robert Berg

“The Spirit of Christmas” by Dean Iannaggi – page 16
Grade 7, Riverside K-8 School; Teacher: Joe Gilbert
Read by Laura Welsh Berg, Lynn Robert Berg, Neil Brookshire, Jonathan Dyrud & Maggie Kettering

Great Lakes Theater “A Christmas Carol” production photography by Roger Mastroianni.
A Christmas W(RAP)!!

By MC Roosevelt (Roosevelt Wallace)

Ebenezer Scrooge was a wealthy old man
He ignored the poor with a wave of his hand.
The man hated holidays, people and such;
So no one thought of him very much.
He refused to change his stingy old ways.
Came a knock at his door and before he could say
“Who can that be?”
It was the spirit of his partner, Jacob Marley.
Jacob warned him if he didn’t change his act,
He would be laying in the ground on his cold, cold back.
You’re gonna get a visit from three scary ghosts,
So listen up pal or you’re gonna be toast.

The first is the past when you used to be pleasant;
The second is now - to teach you a lesson.
The spirit of the future will show you what’s to come;
And it looks like you’ll be remembered as a bum.

“Bah Humbug!” you say, you selfish old grump,
You remind me of a loud-mouth named Donald Trump.
He, like you, had plenty of money,
But no care in his heart or mood that was sunny.
So, take my advice Scrooge; change your way of life Scrooge; start being nice Scrooge.

Ebenezer thought twice, took the ghosts’ advice:
Opened his door to the poor;
Closed his bank to show thanks, then
Opened his heart and got a new start.

~ End ~
The Empty Rocking Chair
By Deaarron King

If you have ever read the story *A Christmas Carol* with Ebenezer Scrooge then you know he was a greedy, mean man who was rude and disrespectful to everyone. Well, it may not be the year 1843, but I swear I know one of his direct descendants, Mr. Balor.

Mr. Balor was a man who would sit outside of his house on the front porch in an old, creaky wooden chair watching people as they walked by. As if his watching people wasn’t creepy and odd enough he would then start talking negatively about everyone as well. Did he keep his comments to himself? Nope, he would just yell it out and tell it to the world. If it happened every now and again I might write it off as him just being in a bad mood. However, he sat on his porch, every single day insulting people who were walking by. Whether it is raining, snowing, sleeting, or sunny and nice, Mr. Balor was on his front porch critiquing everyone.

Last week he yelled, “Nice hat, fatty,” to Ms. Smithers, an elderly lady who lives down the street. Now, while she might have been a bit on the heavy side, she dressed well and she loved her Sunday church going hats. Most times she would not respond and just walk right by, disgusted by his ignorance.

Mr. Freeto seemed to get most of Mr. Balor’s backlash and quick comments. “Last time I saw lips like that there was a hook in it!” Mr. Freeto didn’t like that comment and would mumble something under his breath shaking his head back and forth with his nose wrinkled in annoyance.

To me he would just look, shake his head like he disapproved of my mere presence, and would say, “Hey stupid, learn anything today?” I never answered him because I wasn’t really sure what my response should be. Day in and day out, I would take the insult and just keep on walking.

So this whole nasty attitude had been going on for years and years until one day when he needed the people he disrespected the most.

One day, I was walking by his house, as always, and I looked onto his porch ready for my daily dose of insult—but he wasn’t there. Startled, I stopped for a minute as if I was almost egging him on. I was thinking, come on Balor get it over with, tell me what you think. But there was no Mr. Balor. Finally, a day I don’t have to worry about Mr. Balor, I thought.

As I began to walk away, I felt like something was missing. I stopped, turned around, and began walking up to his front porch. One part of me thought this was completely stupid, but the other part of me was wondering if he was okay. I peeked in the front window, just between the cobwebs and curtains pulled to the one side, and saw Mr. Balor laying there on the floor. Still in his morning robe and slippers, he was...
laying on the floor with a cordless phone about two feet away from him just out of his reach. I knocked on the door as loud as I could and he didn’t move a bit. I pulled out my cell phone and dialed 9-1-1.

Within minutes the rescue squad and fire department came to his aid. The firemen busted down the door and the paramedics were putting all these stickers on his chest before putting him on the cot. They wheeled him out of his house and into the rescue squad. I was worried for Mr. Balor even though I thought he was a real nasty man. I still wanted to know if he would be alright.

About three weeks later I got my answer. It was about seven o’clock in the evening and there was a loud knock on my door. I put my video game on hold and went to answer the door. No one was there, but instead there was a box on the front porch with a red bow on it. I picked it up, stared at it for a bit, and then carefully opened it up—hoping it wasn’t a prank from one of my friends. Inside was a new baseball mitt and baseball wrapped in newspaper. While there was no card inside, there was a little note written on the inside lid of the box. It read, “Thanks – you saved me. Come by and visit anytime.” I knew it must have been Mr. Balor, so I smiled.

The next day, when I was coming home from school, I glanced over at Mr. Balor’s porch and saw him sitting there with a huge smile on his face and a new blue and gray rocking chair sitting empty beside him. I smiled back and joined Mr. Balor for the first of many evenings together as friends. He became a great inspiration to me sharing his experiences and advice that I would use for the rest of my life.

Anyone can change—sometimes it just takes effort to make all the difference in the world.

~ End ~
Another Lost Heart
By Kendall Skillern

Everyone has a purpose whether it be good or bad, helpful or burdening but, scrooges are just there. Constantly searching for their purpose in the money they save and hoard. Wishing that one day all the money they don’t give will make up for the time they wasted counting it. Scrooges despise Christmas. It is the most expensive holiday and for scrooges money is everything they could ever want.

Sharing is foreign and caring is nonexistent. Love is lost because you wouldn’t pay the price to keep it. You were too cheap and love is so rich. You let the spark die, you had to lie, money has you preoccupied. Who will be your savior when you fail? Who will pick you up? Who will wipe the tears that fall? Who will clean your heart up? You frown all day and keep your money locked away in a place that love will never fill. You gave your all in making business but your business made your heart still. It no longer pumped new love into your veins.

There was no branch to hang on to, they wanted you to fall. There was no one there that really loved you, no one you could call. Their attention was soon readjusted and you were no longer in it. You tried to change, you really did but, your greed was way too strong. You lost the human parts of you; all love and compassion gone. No one could or would save you now, no one to catch your fall. The coins weren’t strong enough, the green paper was too thin. Your future was a hot, red place and your past was too dark. No one had ever predicted that you would lose your heart.

- End -
It was two weeks before Christmas in the year of 2043 and once again Hayden Lipson didn’t care. She was forty and she believed that celebrating holidays was trivial. That’s how mostly everyone was today, so she wasn’t the odd man out. Every time Christmas was around she’d wrap herself in about ten automatic heating blankets, glare at her iPhone Genesis X 10, while her house automatically cleaned itself. She didn’t bake cookies. She didn’t play any Christmas music either. This year (like every other year) she has watched about thirty-five old movies from like twenty years ago, but this time she was doing it to drown out the people outside.

You may be wondering: if no one cares about the holiday season, then why would there be people outside celebrating? Good question. This year there was this weird new group called Deck the Hallers. Their whole initiative was to get everyone back in the Christmas spirit and some people were actually joining them! This outraged Hayden. Every day, they went into the town square and sang stupid carols, passed out presents, and served chili and hot chocolate to the citizens. They got everyone to participate in decorating the towns square with lights, a gigantic Christmas tree that Hayden couldn’t believe the town spent money on, and posters promoting a big party the Hallers were hosting.

Hayden just stood and watched out the local cafe’s storefront in disgust. She didn’t want to admit it, though, but she was horrified that this was taking place. She had hated Christmas for the longest, and when everyone eventually did too it made her ecstatic. But now things were changing and she hated change, especially when it involved Christmas.

So today she had enough.

She struggled out of the blankets, threw her iPhone gently on her couch. She scuttled to her room, typed in a few buttons on her “Automatic Clothes Finding Pad” and picked out the warmest coat she had. She was going to stop this once and for all. She also grabbed a scarf, some boots, then bustled to her front door. She looked at herself in the mirror, and at her piercing green eyes and fiery ginger hair that she got from her mother. She shuddered, then walked to the front door. She took a deep breath in, clapped her hands to turn off the lights, then unlocked the door with her handprint and went out. She huffed, straightened her coat, then stomped off her porch.

A little ways down the street she saw a small group of about twenty people singing. They had set up a makeshift stage and started performing Deck the Halls. They were having an impromptu Christmas
program! Hayden stamped her way over to the crowd that had started forming. She tried her best to blend in with the crowd, but that was hard to do when she was the only one frowning in the whole crowd.

One of the people glanced her as she stood on stage. It was a woman probably in her mid-thirties, She wore a worn Twenty-One Pilots shirt that they mass produced nowadays for some kind of hipster trend. She had pale blonde hair with brown highlights streaked throughout and very soft blue eyes with small flecks of hazel. Hayden stared at her still frowning. The girl looked back, then smiled at her. She waved her hand gesturing Hayden to come up. She frantically shook her head, but that only caught the attention of the rest of the chorus and members. They all were cheering her up and smiling hard. Everyone in the small crowd moved back and made her a little room in the center. Hayden didn’t know what to do. All she could do was run.

She ran back to her house. She placed her hand on her keypad and unlocked the door. She fell in and landed on her face. She groaned as she sat up. She heaved as she sat on the ground in a sad heap. Her makeup was smudged, she lost her scarf, and she felt like she sprained her ankle. She crawled to her open room kitchen and tapped the button that called her family physician. She then slumped on the floor and just sat there. “I’m being dramatic,” she muttered. She called for her moving chair by clapping and it came to her happily like an excitable dog. She plopped into her chair and fell asleep.

She was awoken by the sudden ringing of her doorbell. The overhead security system shouted “unknown visitor” in a robotic voice.

“No identification huh? It must not be Dr. Crook…” she said as she controlled the chair to go to the door. She looked at the screen that went along with the security system that showed who was outside. It was the girl with the Twenty-One Pilots shirt. She tried fixing her smudged makeup with her hand and tossed her coat on the floor. She then unlocked the door with her handprint and the door flung open.

“Hey... Hi... Hello, Miss...” She spoke shyly and her body behavior held true to that as well. She had her hands in front of her and her head was held slightly down. She spoke barely above a whisper and was clearly shaking slightly. Hayden didn’t have time for this.

“What do you want. I’m busy,” she lied.

“Oh, sorry to bother you but you dropped your scarf. Also, us Hallers were concerned about you so we saved you some extra chill,” she breathed, her breath showing in the cool winter evening’s air.

She hesitantly handed her the small container of chili and the fuchsia scarf. Hayden reached up to yank the scarf out of the girl’s hand and didn’t take the chili. The girl’s mouth was slightly agape for a couple seconds but she quickly closed it.

“Thanks, Miss...” Hayden muttered, practically under her breath.

“Dalton, Freya Dalton. And your name?” She muttered. Hayden glared at the woman, then noticed her sad expression. She softened a bit and took the chili. “Hayden Lipson” she said softly. Freya looked up and smiled a cute little half smile, Hayden returned the smile for a little bit, then went back to her expressionless glare.
“Thanks Ms. Dalton. I appreciate the chili but you must leave now. I’m expecting someone.”

“Is it your boyfriend?” Freya blurted out uncontrollably. Hayden blushed, tucked a loose strand of her almost ginger hair back, then shook her head.

“No, I haven’t been in a relationship in a long time.” Hayden didn’t like how open she was being. She sat up a little straighter and then smiled slightly. “Like I said though Ms. Dalton, I have many things to do and I do not like being interrogated by a girl I barely know. Again, thanks for the chili, but I need for you to go.”

She shut the door on Freya’s face before she even got to respond. She glanced at the pad in which she could see Freya’s mouth was agape and she was just standing there, confused. Hayden reached to turn on the intercom and cleared her throat.

“Goodbye, Ms. Dalton.”

Freya looked up at the camera, shut her mouth, nodded, the scurried away. Hayden felt at ease now that she was gone. She controlled her chair to the kitchen, grabbed a spoon and ate her chili as she watched Doctor Strange.

A week later and after Dr. Crook told Hayden that her ankle was fine, Hayden was back to her usual daily routine. Wake up, take a stop at the cafe down the street, then go home. She wished she could go to work but she was on vacation. She loved her job at her law firm. She loved bickering back and forth intellectually. Everything she said would be true and valid so that’s how she would always win her cases. It was easy to be condescending to her. She was never in public, though, or so she thought. Hayden went to the cafe as the start to her routine, but trouble was already brewing.

At first, the cafe was practically quiet, about a dozen people were quietly sipping macchiatos and decafs as soft new age music played from the speakers. Then seemingly out of nowhere about thirty Hallers came in singing Deck the Halls. They ran around the cafe throwing glitter and singing as loud as they could. The cafe erupted with people dancing and screaming the lyrics “boughs of holly” repeatedly like it was the last thing they could say. Everyone was up jumping all around, but Hayden stayed in her seat. She sipped her decaf angrily as people came around, showering her with glitter and streamers.

Freya came around and she looked like a totally different person. She had a wide smile spread on her face and she came around and started gripping on Hayden’s shoulders.

“C’mon Hayden!” Freya screeched, jumping up and down, still holding onto Hayden’s shoulders. Hayden groaned and shook Freya off of her.

“Look Ms. Dalton! This is terribly childish and just plain absurd. I’ve never seen a woman around your age do something this stupid!” Hayden said, glaring Freya in the eyes. Freya’s expression went sad and
her eyes began to water. Everyone stopped singing and throwing glitter and stared at the scene awkwardly.

“I’m... I’m sorry Hayden. I didn’t mean to. I’ll stop.” Freya said. She turned around slowly then walked out of the cafe. Hayden stood in the middle of the red, silver, gold glittery mess. She stood limply while she picked out glitter from her hair. She felt bad. She hated feeling bad. Why did she even care about Freya? She couldn’t help to feel sorry for her. She hated to admit it but she was sweet. She was so sweet. Too sweet to be hurt like that.

Hayden slowly grabbed her belongings off of the table, straightened her trench coat, and slumped her way out of the cafe. When she got to her house, she switched on the television and watched some weird show about Norse gods and goddesses. One goddess was the goddess of love, beauty, war, and sexuality. Her name was Freya.

Hayden withered in her seat. She groaned, thinking about Freya’s sad expression and crawled into a fetal position on the couch. She grabbed two automatic heating blankets and turned up the volume to the documentary. When she was just about to sleep, the doorbell rang. She groggily got up and lazily put her hand on the pad. She didn’t look to see who it was and just opened the door. She rubbed her eyes and looked up to see who it was. There stood Freya in a long billowing black skirt and a small red leather jacket to keep her warm.

“Freya, uh ... are you cold?” was all Hayden could muster.

“Yeah, I ... I am. Can I come in,” Freya said averting Hayden’s eyes. She didn’t seem upset but Hayden could still see something was bothering her.

“Look Freya, I’m sorry. I really am,” Hayden said getting two cups of hot chocolate. She gave one to Freya and sat on the couch.

“What’s with you?” Freya said abruptly. Hayden paused then looked at Freya. She looked deep into her blue eyes and shuddered.

“What do YOU mean?” Hayden asked.

“Like why... why are you so mean?”

Hayden felt bad and wanted to scream or at least crawl out of her skin, but she just sat there and admitted to it.

“You really wanna know?” Hayden said. Freya grabbed Hayden’s hands and Hayden flinched a bit.

“Sure, Hayden. I won’t judge.” Digging deep in her repressed memories, Hayden began to open up.

“My morn was a really nice lady. She used to read to me whenever I was feeling low, upset, or even bored.” Hayden chuckled at the thought Freya smiled slightly and started sitting closer to Hayden. At first Hayden was apprehensive, but soon Freya was cuddling up next to her “She used to bake cookies for me and sing songs to me. She was always there for every concert, for every play, for every event I was a part of. But then she was diagnosed with Leukemia,” Hayden said, her mood plummeting. Her
eyes started watering and she cuddled up next to Freya. Freya wrapped her arms around Hayden as she bawled. Freya felt warm and good and smelled like mint and cocoa.

“She died when I was 14, on Christmas ... I was never the same after that. Every potential for a relationship was crushed because I couldn’t commit, I practically threw myself in my job. Each case I won because I was bitter and I loved arguing for stuff. Law saved me I guess,” Hayden said, sniffling all the way through.

“But it didn’t Hayden, it really didn’t.” Hayden sat up a bit and looked at Freya.

“Huh? Why’s that?”

“Because, you sit in here all day, watching movies and being lazy. The Christmas season is supposed to be a light and happy time. All your worries are supposed to go away. Same... same goes with love,” Freya said looking at Hayden. Both Hayden and Freya looked at each other. Hayden never even noticed how pretty Freya was with her soft features and slender bodice.

Hayden gripped Freya’s hands and then kissed her. Freya fell deeper into the kiss and Hayden did too, but reluctantly. She knew how all her relationships went and was afraid at first. But after feeling the warmth of Freya’s kiss and embrace, she felt okay. It seemed like they lost track of time. They sat there in the dark living room with only the TV to light it and talked and kissed and laughed. Freya was sweet. Too sweet. She was the best she’d ever had. In all forty years of her life, she hadn’t met anyone who she liked on the same level as her mother. Freya had a unique sense of humor and politeness that warmed Hayden’s insides. Freya was like the goddess of love. She knew just what to say and how to make Hayden happy. She felt safe with Freya. She felt good.

A few weeks later it was Christmas day and everyone in the city was in high spirits, including Hayden. Hayden helped Freya prep for the party. She prepared some of the meals. She also helped decorate the venue they were having the party at and helped the chair prepare for the songs. Many people were shocked that she was actually doing anything to help the party, but that didn’t faze Hayden.

Hayden felt the best she had in a while. She felt like, after years and years of being reclusive and mean to others, she should finally be kind and nice to those she’d otherwise be mean to. Hayden didn’t want to be known for years to come as the lady who hated Christmas. She saw a real change in the community and saw that everyone was beginning to get back into the Christmas spirit. She didn’t want to be the only one left out. She also had a new mentor that would help her out with learning how to be kind. Freya was her little torch that would help her out of the dark hole she had made for herself. Hayden was happy and had someone she could share that happiness with. Now with Freya, she didn’t have to mope about and be sad anymore. She could be happy and free from life’s troubles. That’s how she felt and that’s how it was.
Before the party started, Freya had come over to the little table Hayden was sitting at in the corner of the venue. Hayden lit up and smiled at Freya as she pulled up a seat next to her.

“What going on behind your back, Freya?” Hayden asked, beaming. Freya handed her a small blue box with a large bow on top.

“For you, Hayden, I’m glad we have each other though we’ve only known each other for such a short time. I don’t know why but I can’t get you out of my mind. I really can’t. I know it’s cliché but there’s something about you I can’t explain. It’s weird. Every single time I see you, there’s this spark. You make something happen within me that’s like one of the best feelings I’ve ever had. Sorry for this soppy little spiel, but I can’t get enough of you,” Freya said, blushing and trying to hide under her hair.

“Freya, I feel the same. But seriously what is this?” she laughed, gesturing to the little box. They both laughed, then Freya nodded, gesturing for her to open the box. Hayden fumbled about frantically, trying to open the box for she was so eager to see what was in it. She gasped as she saw the present Freya had got her. “What’s this?” she said holding up a small pin.

“It’s a pin that can detect when someone you care about is around. A bit cheesy I know but ... I dunno, really. I didn’t know what else to get you.” Freya said blushing and trying to hide under her hair.

“No, Freya this is great! Thanks!” Hayden embraced Freya. Some of the visitors came in so both Hayden and Freya jumped up to greet them. Hayden pinned the gift Freya got her on her blouse then joined the party.

The party was going well and everyone was having a great time. Hayden sighed romantically as she watched Freya dance wildly in the center of the dancefloor. She flailed her arms and danced passionately. She grabbed Hayden’s hands suddenly and they danced like no one was watching.

Hayden’s pin was going off like crazy, but she was too in the moment to realize. They twirled and twirled on that dance floor, igniting the floor with magic with each step they took. It was like they were isolated in their own world and it was magical. They kissed and danced and everyone just stared in awe. It was like magic was sparking all around them, touching everyone. As it touched everyone, they couldn’t help but join in the madness that was happening that Christmas evening. Hayden and Freya were the Christmas spirit of that year and no one could say anything.

~ End ~
Twitter Updates; Tweets Being the Character Scrooge
By Mya Belton

@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843
Walking down the Street, I hate Jolly people. I wish people will stop wishing me Merry Christmas. Nothing is merry about it. #LeaveMe Alone

@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843
Humbug. It is very cold outside. I cannot concentrate nor pay attention to anyone. This stupid dog is getting on my last nerve. #Getting On My Nerves

@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843
Humbug. My employee expects to get a raise and get the day off tomorrow because of Christmas. Not going to happen. #Not Happening

@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843
I hate Christmas so much. I wish it wasn’t even a holiday. I just don’t understand all the excitement about this made up holiday. #Get Rid Of Christmas

@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843
I like being alone. People annoy me, being all jolly and joyful. Humbug. I love staying home by myself and enjoying being alone. #Loner For Life

@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843
I think I’m going crazy I literally just changed in my pajamas and I thought I saw a ghost. Maybe I should just lay down and rest my eyes a bit. #Going Crazy
Someone is knocking at the door. Oh my god, I really just laid down and I do not want to get up. This better be important. #Lazy

Oh my god. The visit I just got was someone I knew from 15 years earlier and he died. I think someone is trying to trick me into thinking it was him. #WhatIsGoingOn

He was talking about some “Christmas prophecy” and I will be visited by three ghosts by the end of the night from 12 am-2am. #ChristmasProphecy!? #Ghost!?

Humbug. This all in my head. I really did have a bad day with all this fuss about Christmas and joy. I really should consider moving. #WhereShouldIGo

I am just going to go to sleep and wish this day never even appeared on the calendar. #WhyMe

I know ghosts aren’t real but this ghost of the past is very persuasive. #PastLife

The ghost of the past just showed me my sister. Oh, how much I missed her so. Without her, Christmas even my family was never the same after she passed. #MissMySister

Then he showed me why my wife left me. I was so focused into working and everything that I didn’t realize I was losing my family. She left me on Christmas. #ChristmasSucks
I just got home after the ghost of the past showed me my past memories about Christmas. These memories made me realize I regret more than I thought. #ChangeThePast

I’m slowly waiting for the next ghost to come and show the present memories of why I don’t like Christmas. I cannot go to sleep. #SoTired

I allowed the ghost of my present to show me the memories that I soon will remember rather than forget. #DoNotForget

Wow. I never realized how much my words affected people. I was just so mad. I couldn’t channel my anger. #Sorry

The ghost of present really showed me how I’ve affected people around me even tiny tim. I wish I can help him and I will. #ChangeOfHeart

I’m slowly starting to realize what Christmas is all about. I’m on my way home to wait for the next ghost to come and visit me. #Nerves

The future ghost scared me. Both me and tiny tim will die. I will never get over the things held onto all these years. #LetItGo #Frozen
I don’t want to live this life anymore. I truly want to live a better life and truly know the feeling of Christmas that I never knew. #BetterLife
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

I literally had to beg the future ghost for another chance because everyone around deserve better and I want to give them better. #SecondChance
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

The ghost of the future granted me another day to redo Christmas and straighten up my act. #RedoMyLife
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

I’m about to go home, change my clothes, and make everything right with everyone. #RedoMyLife
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

I just left the market. Then on my way to give the homeless people some money and food because I couldn’t help them before. #LittleThingsMakeBigDifferences
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

I’m going to go to the toy store and buy some toys for the kids at the orphanage. They deserve these toys so much more and I’m hoping they have a great Christmas. #ChangingLives
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

I’m paying for tiny tim’s surgery and I’m also buying a great feast for me and my family. This redo was well deserved. #ImAChangedMan
@Ebenezerscrooge
@ebenezer_scrooge1843

I had an awesome Christmas because I got to show people I actually cared! #MerryChristmas

~ End ~
The Spirit of Christmas
By Dean Iannaggi

The old man with a cane walked down the street, a smile lighting his face and he seemed younger than his years.

“Hello Mr. Scrooge,” called a man sitting on a bench. His children ran around, near the streetlight.

“Good day, young chap!” said Scrooge. “And a beautiful day it is, wouldn’t you agree?”

It was, in fact, a gorgeous day. The type of day where the sun was shining, the birds were chirping and the weather was neither too chilly nor too warm, but was just right. It was not a typical November day, but when a nice day was offered at this time of year, everyone was thankful for it. Scrooge walked down the street and into his counting house. He hummed a tune as he entered his office. Bob Cratchit walked in right after Scrooge did.

“Good morning, Mr. Scrooge,” Bob said as he hung his coat and sat down.

“A good morning, indeed!” Scrooge replied. “I can’t believe it is so nice out, and Christmas is only a few weeks away!”

~ ~ ~

“I think I’d like to live in a smaller house, like the one we saw the other day,” Belle said to her son, John.

“A smaller house may be better for you, Mother. But you may need a lender for that,” replied her son.

“Hmmmm, a lender? I will have to look into that.” Belle said.

“Yes, Mother, a lender. Are you sure that is what you want? I can look into it for you to make sure it is a good one, and someone you can trust.” said John.

“Well, that might be nice,” replied Belle, “But, maybe I can ask around and find one myself”

“Let me know if you need my help,” said John, “This was a nice visit, but I should be getting home to my Sara and the children. Goodbye, Mother.”

John gave his mother a kiss as he left the house.

“Goodbye, my Johnny. Give my love to Sara and the girls,” Belle called to him.

Belle loved days like this, when the sun shined. It was even more of a gift, because it was November, and usually it was cold, and sometimes even snowing at this time of year. Belle decided to sit outside her home and read with the sun on her bonnet and a slight breeze in her skirt. She read for a few hours, and then decided in was time for lunch. Life had been quiet since her husband has passed away. He had been gone for eight years now, and lately the house seemed too large without a big family to fill it. Her
children and grandchildren came around, but they had their own lives. And Belle had some wonderful friends, but she had lost of few of them, as well.

As Belle was preparing to go fix herself some lunch, the milkman came by the house. She thanked him for the delivery and then asked him if he might know of a good lender.

“Oh, you are looking to move, ma’am?” asked the milkman. “Well, I know of a good lending house - but you have to go into downtown London - there is a place, goes by the name of Scrooge and Marley. A great business, it is!”

“Oh!” exclaimed Belle, “Thank you for the name. A good business, you say?”

“The finest,” said the milkman, as he walked away. “Have a nice day!”

Belle walked into her house and closed the door, as she pondered what the milkman had told her.

“Scrooge and Marley? As in Ebenezer? Could it be?”

Belle had been in love with a man named Ebenezer Scrooge in her youth, but he was quite obsessed with money, and she ended things with him some forty years ago. Her husband had once encountered Scrooge and he said he seemed to be mean and stingy,

“Well, I suppose it could be a relative who has taken over the business, since the milkman has sung the praises of this lender. I will soon find out,” she declared to herself.

She grabbed her wrap and went out the door to see for herself. As Belle began her walk downtown, she realized she was so flabbergasted by the milkman’s suggestion that she forgot to ask him for directions.

“Excuse me,” Belle said to a man, as she passed him. “Do you happen to know where Scrooge and Marley is located?”

“Sure, I passed there just today. Go down Jensen road, then turn right on Memory Lane. It is on the left side of the street.” replied the man.

“Thank you, sir,” said Belle. And she wondered if she would be thankful.

~ ~ ~

It was quite a normal day at the offices of Scrooge and Marley. People came in for business, or to stop by for a quick hello. Scrooge had decided to come out of his office to ask Bob about a particular loan when the front door opened, and a woman walked in to the office. She may have been of a seasoned age, but she was quite lovely at Scrooge’s first glance. But then, he looked at the woman’s face. Scrooge found himself looking into a pair of sparking eyes that he once knew so well.

“Belle?” questioned Scrooge.

“Ebenezer!” whispered Belle.

“Oh my goodness, Belle! Can it be you? How have you been?” exclaimed Scrooge.

“I’ve been well, Ebenezer. And you, how have you been?” asked Belle.
“I’m just wonderful,” said Scrooge. “I had heard that you had married and had children?” he asked, sorrowfully.

“Why yes, my boys are grown now. James, William and John have moved off and have families of their own,” replied Belle. “My Henry, he became ill eight years ago, and never recovered. I lost him a short time later.”

“I’m sorry to hear of it, Belle.” Scrooge said.

“He was a good man, a good husband and a good father,” sighed Belle. “But times moves on and I had to move forward as well. Which brings me to my visit. I am looking to move out of our house, which has become too large. I heard I might be able to find a loan through your office?”

Scrooge sat Belle down and they review her finances. With the money she would get from her home, she may not have to have much of a loan. When they were through, Belle got up to leave. As Scrooge walked her to the door, he made a decision.

“Belle,” he said. “Do you think you might like to meet for a cup of tea sometime?”

Belle thought about the man she once knew, the one who was only concerned about how much money he had. But this Ebenezer seemed different. More like the one who she first loved, so many years ago. A strange feeling came over her and made her feel like she had to say yes.

“Thank you, Ebenezer”, said Belle. “I think that sounds lovely.”

Scrooge was full of hope.

“Please, come to my home tomorrow at tea time,” said Scrooge. “I live in the big house on the left, and the end of the street.”

“I will be there, Ebenezer,” replied Belle. “Thank you.”

~ ~ ~

The next night both Scrooge and Belle were getting ready for their meeting. Scrooge left work early and had his housekeeper set out tea and biscuits. Belle dressed and set off to Scrooge’s home following his directions. She went down Memory Lane and arrived at Scrooge’s huge home. Belle peered up the house to look at the roof, and she thought she saw a face in the top window. How odd, she thought. She looked again, but she had blinked, and the face seemed to have disappeared.

Belle knocked on the door, and Scrooge answered with a big smile on his face.
“Good afternoon, Madam!” he exclaimed.

“Good afternoon, Ebenezer,” Belle answered.

He led her into the tea room, and they sat. Belle looked around at the huge mansion and wondered how he felt living in this place all by himself. As they sat and the tea was poured they began to chat. Belle told him all about her life and her children and grandchildren, Ebenezer told Belle about his business, his nephew, and how he gave to many charities. Finally, Belle decided to ask a question that had been on her mind since the previous day.

“Ebenezer, I don’t mean to be rude,” said Belle, “but the reason we parted so many years ago was because you seemed to have loved money more that you loved me. But something has changed. You seem different. Have you finally made enough money that you are happy?”

“Well, Belle,” said Scrooge, “Something happened to me a few years ago. I wasn’t happy having lots of money. I finally realized that I wanted people to care about me, and I wanted to care about people. I feared not having things for so long, but I had all this money, and it wasn’t enough. I still wasn’t happy. I finally realized that people are more important than money.”

“Yes, they are,” Belle said softly.

Belle said she had to get home before it got dark, and got ready to leave.

“I could walk you home, Belle, if you would like,” Scrooge said hopefully.

“No, thank you, Ebenezer,” replied Belle. “But thank you for your offer. It was so nice to see you again, after all these years.”

Belle left the huge mansion and walked to her home, with a smile on her face.

During that month, Ebenezer and Belle continued to visit with each other, and grew to enjoy spending time together again. It seemed just like it was when they were young. Belle always felt a strange presence whenever she came to Scrooge’s home; as though something was watching over her, and encouraging her to give Scrooge another chance. But she was enjoying her time with Ebenezer so much that she simply put it out of her mind. She and Scrooge were falling in love all over again. Imagine, at their age!

One evening, during the early part of December, Belle tossed in her bed, but couldn’t sleep. She felt as though something was calling to her, telling her life was too short to waste. It felt almost like a SPIRIT!

When Belle woke that morning, she knew what she had to do. She hurried to dress and hurried to Scrooge’s house. She knocked and knocked on the door.

“Coming,” Scrooge called.

As Scrooge opened the door, Belle rushed in.
“Belle!” he said.
“I had to see you!” she exclaimed.
“I couldn’t sleep last night,” Scrooge said. “And this morning, I knew what I had to do.”
Scrooge sat Belle on a chair and held her hand.
“Years ago, I let you get away, and I can’t let that happen again. Belle, will you marry me?”
“Oh, Ebenezer!” cried Belle. “Of course I will.”
He then pulled a beautiful ring out of his pocket and placed it on her finger.
Belle and Ebenezer had their wedding two weeks later, the day before Christmas. They invited the entire city to their wedding. Belle’s children were happy that their mother had found someone to share the rest of her life with, and who put her above everything.
Belle and Ebenezer said their “I dos” and spent the rest of their days together.
And Belle never told Ebenezer about those strange feelings she had, because Ebenezer would probably laugh at her. She knew Ebenezer would never believe in a spirit!!

~ End ~
ABOUT GREAT LAKES THEATER

Charles Fee, Producing Artistic Director

The mission of Great Lakes Theater, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the company's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods including the 20th century, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. On its mainstage and through its education program, the company seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. This Cleveland theater company wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The company's commitment to classic theater is magnified in the educational programs (for both adults and students) that surround its productions. Great Lakes Theater has a strong presence in area schools, offering an annual series of student matinees and, for over 30 years, an acclaimed school residency program led by teams of specially trained actor-teachers.

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Chennelle Bryant-Harris  Chelsea Cannon  DeLee Cooper  Gail Cudak  Carol Dolan  Kelly Schaffer Florian
Greta Insolia  David Hansen  Khaki Hermann  Diane K. Hupp  Shaun O’Neill  Lisa Ortenzi  Nancy Wellener