

~~Clerk~~ — ~~(To audience) Scrooge knew he was dead.~~

Timothy *(To audience)* Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were business partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole friend and sole mourner. So there is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's father died before the play began, there would be nothing remarkable in his taking a stroll in the woods.

*Light brightens with the dawn; people start to enter and begin their day. Children run through, laughing.*

Timothy Yet without his father's ghost, Hamlet's story would have been a different one indeed. And so it is, or was, for me. *(Timothy is joined by his wife and family)* And so it may be, perhaps, for some of you. And so I hope that you will lend an hour and a half of your time, and permit me – permit us – to tell a story in which each of us played a part, in years long past. A story which begins seven years to the day after Marley's death –

~~Shopkeeper~~ — Merry Christmas! *(entering)*

~~Vendor~~ — Merry Christmas! *(entering)*

Timothy When even in our dark corner of Londontown, *(Music begins)* if there is not good fortune, still there is good cheer, and joyfulness in the air, and music!