

SCROOGE. No, no. I should just like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.

(A cheer from the crowd as a toy drum is unwrapped and CHARLEY tries it out.)

FEZZIWIG. My dears, the hour grows late. Before we depart, however, Mrs. Fezziwig and I have an announcement. As you know, Mrs. Fezziwig and I have labored these many years to rear a very particular child. The fruits of our labor, I am happy to say, are most satisfactory – more than satisfactory. They are summed up in one beautiful word: Belle.

(Applause.)

MRS. FEZZIWIG. Now at the very dawn of her youth and beauty, she has surrendered to the wiles of one of you in this very room. One to whom we've furnished shelter, food, and a warm bed.

DICK WILKINS. A sore back and aching eyes, too!

FEZZIWIG. Yes, we'll not deny he's the hardest-working apprentice ever to balance a book or close an account.

MRS. FEZZIWIG. Come spring, our lovely Belle shall wed that most industrious of young men, Ebenezer Scrooge!

(Applause.)

DICK WILKINS. A dance! A dance from the couple!

(The lights dim, and BELLE and YOUNG SCROOGE embrace and dance to a slow waltz based on "Little Christmas Child.")

SCROOGE. *(Scarcely able to watch.)* Spirit, take me home.

(As the short dance ends, YOUNG SCROOGE and BELLE drift apart, YOUNG SCROOGE to the desk, which has been moved downstage. He sits, becoming absorbed in his work. BELLE approaches him. Some time has passed since the dance, and YOUNG SCROOGE is a changed man.)