

THE GHOSTS ALL AROUND US

A Musical by Jonathan Fadner

A Synopsis

by Kimbirdlee Fadner

Jacob Marley is counting coins in a dystopian Dickensian counting house when he suddenly, as everyone knows, dies. Charles Dickens appears and sings “Jacob Marley is Dead” which is a glimpse into the writing of his classic novel “A Christmas Carol”. But then, the focus turns to Cheryl Makepeace, who is deeply immersed in her own version of “A Christmas Carol” with her four children on Christmas Eve and is actually the one telling the story that the audience is seeing and hearing. Every year, since her husband William died, Cheryl reads this book hoping to teach her kids goodwill and kindness. This year, the family moved to Roosevelt Island, once called Blackwell’s Island - home of The Octagon Apartments where they now live, which used to be the New York City Lunatic Asylum. Cheryl is inspired that Charles Dickens visited this “crazy” place the year before he wrote “A Christmas Carol” and shares this exciting history with the kids who are unimpressed. Cheryl continues her storytelling, while taking generous sips of eggnog.

A wild and zany song takes place in the lunatic asylum where Dickens visited while in America in 1842. Nelly Bly is the star and the Asylumettes are her backup singers. The show number merges a Broadway-style spectacular with the colorful and absurd history of Nelly Bly, Charles Dickens and Blackwell Island through the mind of Cheryl, as she continues to sip her eggnog. Then, Ghost of William, who coincidentally resembles her deceased husband, appears to convince Dickens to write a book that will “frighten the rich people into helping the poor.” The Scrooge character is born! He sings “Bah Humbug” to his nephew, charity workers, a porridge man and, of course, Bob Cratchit.

Cheryl repeatedly mixes up the names of Scrooge and Stingyas, her boss and NYC real estate tycoon who also lives in The Octagon. The kids begin to wonder what’s up with mom as she drifts off into an eggnog induced slumber...

Babba, Mommy’s favorite baby of the family, reveals some terrible news - that Mom’s boss Stingyas fired her that very morning on Christmas Eve! The four kids devise a plan to “pull a Charles Dickens” on Stingyas. They pretend they are ghosts and sing “Knock Knock” to try to scare Stingyas into giving Cheryl Makepeace her job back. The plan fails miserably and the kids run off, terrified. But maybe it stirred something in the land of ghosts.

Stingyas is then visited by three ghosts. First, Ghost Of William appears and sings “Ghosts All Around Us”. Then Ghost of Fred Jr (Stingyas’s brother) comes and shows Stingyas his troubled past, being bullied as a kid, his relationship with his greedy and cruel Father, Fuzzybutt and the tragic story of his own brother Fred Jr. - “Thankful for Everything You Forgot”. Then Ghost of Charity (Fred Jr’s wife and mother of William) arrives and takes him to the present, trying to show the damage that he has caused to the Makepeace Family - “So Much In Common”.

When Stingyas wakes up in his own bed, he is convinced that he ate a bad potato and blames Campbell’s Soup Co for his crazy hallucinations. He delights at the prospect of suing Campbell’s for at least \$183 Million. Suddenly, he is struck by the Red Bus and meets his demise.

Cheryl wakes up, groggy from all the eggnog, on Christmas morning, confused as to why the kids didn’t wake her up to open presents. Ghost of William, posing as a doctor, calls Cheryl to inform her of Stingyas’s death. Not only does she inherit Stingyas’s fortune, but she also learns that William is actually Stingyas’s nephew and that she is the only living next-of-kin. She imagines using his fortune to improve the standard of living for Roosevelt Islanders, including her own struggling family, with a wink to Charles Dickens. The Makepeace family reflects on how they have made it through again and again, with acceptance, love and gratitude. All the characters return to sing “Grateful For You”.

THE END