

## Scrooge, Christmas Past

(THE SPIRIT ENTERS. THIS SPIRIT WEARS A SHIMMERING WHITE TUNIC, AND CARRIES A BRANCH OF HOLLY. A NIMBUS OF LIGHT SEEMS TO SURROUND AND FOLLOW THE SPIRIT FIGURE WHEREVER IT MOVES.)

SCROOGE: The clock! (REMEMBERS.) "When the bell tolls one!" (PAUSE.) Hello? Is anyone there? (NO REPLY.) Was it a dream or not?

SCROOGE: (STARING AT THE SPIRIT.) Are you are you the Spirit whose coming was foretold to me?

SPIRIT: (IN A GENTLE VOICE) I am!

SCROOGE: Who and what are you?

SPIRIT: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE: Long past?

SPIRIT: No. Your Past.

SCROOGE: What business brings you here?

SPIRIT: Your welfare!

SCROOGE: I'm much obliged, Spirit, but — but I think a night of unbroken rest would do me more good. (STARTS TO PULL HIS COVERS OVER HIS HEAD AGAIN.)

SPIRIT: Touch my hand!

SCROOGE: (WHO IN SPITE OF HIMSELF CAN'T SEEM TO HELP BUT OBEY.) Wh — where are we going?

SPIRIT: Walk with me!

(AS SCROOGE AND THE SPIRIT WALK TOGETHER, THE LIGHTS COME UP ON A SCENE FROM SCROOGE'S YOUNG BOYHOOD SCHOOL DAYS.

SPIRIT: (GESTURES TOWARD THE AUDIENCE AREA AND THEN POINTS TO THE GENERAL AREA ON STAGE.) Look!

SCROOGE: (HE LOOKS ALL AROUND VERY EAGERLY AND HAPPILY.) Good Heaven! I was a boy here!

SPIRIT: Your lip is trembling, and what is that upon your cheek?

SCROOGE: (BRUSHES AWAY A TEAR.) Nothing! Nothing!

SPIRIT: You remember the way?

SCROOGE: Remember it! I could walk it blindfolded.

SPIRIT: Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!

SCROOGE: But I remember it all! All the boys! Tommie Jenkins! Jamie Evans! Henry Wilson! And Charlie Robinson! The whole school! I remember them all! At Christmas time they all went home ... shouting and happy. ... (HE STOPS.)

SPIRIT: But the school was not quite deserted. A solitary boy, neglected by his friends, is left there still. (GESTURES.)

SCROOGE: (SADLY) Yes, yes. I know. I remember. Why— It's myself! When I was a boy! Poor boy! (AFTER A MOMENT.) I wish — oh, but it's too late now.

SPIRIT: What is the matter?

SCROOGE: Nothing, nothing. There were some children singing carols outside my door last night. I should like to have given them something, instead of— well — that's all.

SPIRIT: (SMILES.) I see.