

# Scrooge, Ghost of Christmas Past

30

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Act I

SCROOGE. Much obliged—but I can't help thinking that a night of unbroken sleep would be more conducive to that end.



GHOST 1. Don't trifle with me, sir. This is a matter of salvation. Yours. *(Extends hand.)* Rise. Rise and walk with me. *(Starts downstage.)*

SCROOGE *(following)*. Where?

GHOST 1 *(pantomimes opening the drapes, flinging the windows open; points above)*. There.

SCROOGE. The sky? I am a mere mortal. I'll fall.

GHOST 1 *(extending hand)*. Touch your hand to mine. You shall be upheld.

SCROOGE. But—but—

*(The GHOST won't be denied. Slowly, tentatively, SCROOGE moves his hand to rest on that of GHOST. The moment their hands touch—a flash of light. Black-out. Music. And the sound of a rushing wind. They are flying among the stars... The wind soon calms and fades. Cold bright light floods the stage. Limbo setting except for a small bench upstage, perhaps one or two stark leafless trees. It's winter.)*

SCROOGE. Good heavens. I know this countryside. I was bred and brought up here.

GHOST 1. Your lip is trembling. And what is that on your cheek?

SCROOGE *(rubbing it away)*. Nothing.

GHOST 1. Do you remember that path? *(Indicates bench.)*

SCROOGE. Remember it? I could walk it blindfolded.

GHOST 1. And that great mansion of dull red brick at the head of the path?

**SCROOGE.** My school, what else? The charity school. For children whose parents were too poor to care for them through the year.

**GHOST 1.** Strange to have forgotten these things for so many years...



*(The STUDENTS begin to appear. Their clothes are poor, ill-fitting, patched. They carry shabby bundles of belongings, or cheap valises. Among them is YOUNG SCROOGE. During this:)*

**DICKENS.** It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes. The spacious offices were little used. Their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, their gates decayed. Visible through many open doors were small dreary rooms, poorly furnished.

*(One of the YOUNGSTERS walks toward SCROOGE, who darts back.)*

**GHOST 1.** They can't see you. They are but shadows of things that have been.

**SCROOGE.** Mighty thin shadows, I'd say.

**DICKENS.** There was a vast and chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candlelight, and not too much to eat. But on this particular day, the gloom of the setting could not suppress certain feelings of elation...

**BOY** (*hugging GIRL*). A merry Christmas to you, Felicity.

**GIRL.** And you.