

Scrooge / Street Boy

76

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Act II

SCENE SIX

(Lights snap up on SCROOGE's bedchamber. SCROOGE kneels on the bed, clutching the post, bug-eyed with terror.)

SCROOGE (*babbling*). I will keep Christmas. The three spirits will live and strive within me. I will sponge out the writing on that stone—*(A beat. He blinks.)* The stone. Where's the stone? *(Feels the bedpost.)* This is my bedpost. *(Feels covers.)* My bed. *(Looks around.)* My room. *(Jumps out of bed, feeling his arms and legs wildly.)* I'm alive—I'm alive! *(Then—another momentous discovery.)* There are no chains! It's all right, it's all true—it all happened—and the shadows of things that would have been, can be dispelled. They will be! Oh, Jacob Marley—Heaven and Christmas time be praised! I say it on my knees, old Jacob—*(He kneels, hands clasped high.)* On my knees! *(There is a moment of genuine joy. Tears fill his eyes. Then he jumps up again.)* I don't know what to do!

(He dances around the stage. DICKENS enters and stands watching.)

SCROOGE (*dancing*). I am as light as a feather. I am as happy as an angel. I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man—*(Stops.)* I feel like laughing aloud! *(A beat. Then—very faint, tentative.)* Hah. *(A little louder.)* Hah-hah! *(Still louder.)* Hah-hah-hah!

DICKENS (*to audience*). Really—for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid

laugh. A most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs.

SCROOGE. But I don't know what day it is. I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. I don't know anything—I'm like a baby. Never mind, I don't care, I'd rather be a baby. (*Runs downstage, unlatches the imaginary windows and flings them open. Brilliant sunshine floods the stage. A pealing of many bells begins faintly and comes up underneath. Bells should fade out a few speeches later. SCROOGE leans out.*) Whoop! Hello! Hello, down there! (*Gazing out.*) No fog! No mist! Clear bracing air! Golden sunlight! Heavenly sky! Merry bells! Oh, glorious—glorious!

(*STREET BOY has entered downstage of the bedroom. SCROOGE plays scene downstage of him, looking out the window and "down"—that is, into audience.*)

SCROOGE. You there! Boy! What is today?

STREET BOY. What's that, guv'nor?

SCROOGE. What's today, my fine fellow?

STREET BOY. Today? Why, Christmas Day.

SCROOGE (*to himself*). Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The spirits did it all in one night. Of course, why not? They can do anything—(*Sees STREET BOY starting out.*) Just a moment, my lad.

STREET BOY. Hallo? Yes?

SCROOGE. Do you know the poultry shop in the next street but one, on the corner?

STREET BOY. I should hope I do, guv'nor. I live 'round here.