

SCROOGE Quickly, spiryty - take me where you will. I'll follow.

C. PAST Come.

Again they journey...and again the light and the air change .. And the SPIRIT suddenly stops.

C. PAST Look.

SCROOGE looks and sees the shadow of a child sitting alone.

SCROOGE It's a child.

C. PAST What child?

SCROOGE It's me, Spirit - alone, at school - waiting. Waiting.

C. PAST Were you often alone?

SCROOGE Nearly always, Spirit, I had no friends at school. My father hated me so I was seldom at home. I tried at school - I think I tried. But I had no friends to speak of. *(A TEACHER enters to THE BOY - looks at him, hands him a book.)* My real friends - my only friends - were those in books, Ali Baba - Robinson Crusoe - Robin Hood - They were my friends.

C. PAST Look! *(A fantasy sequence bringing these to life for the lonely boy.)*

Again for a moment there is the shadow but this time THE SHADOW soon becomes substance.

C. PAST Remember?

SCROOGE I - I think I remember.

C. PAST You last day at school. Look - your sister Fan.

And as SCROOGE looks, he sees himself on the day of leaving school, pacing about the room, again waiting..and very soon FAN comes to him.

Start

FAN I have come to bring you home.

SCROOGE Home?

FAN Yes, home home - for ever and ever.

SCROOGE But - father?

FAN Father's agreed. Oh, you won't even know father; he's so changed, so kind. So -

SCROOGE But why? - what's happened?

FAN Who knows what's happened. Just suddenly - one night - he spoke so gently to me when I was going to bed that I thought I'll ask him now - just this once more - whether you could come home! And he said "Yes; yes, you should come home. And he's arranged the coach for me to fetch you. And he's arranged that you don't have to come back here any more. And he's arranged that we shall all be together for Christmas - and that we shall have the merriest time in all the world.

SCROOGE Oh, Fan, how wonderful. How wonderful.

FAN Quickly, now. The coach is waiting.

SCROOGE Not so fast, little Fan, not so fast.

FAN But we mustn't waste a minute.

SCROOGE I must fetch my books and - and -

FAN Quickly then, fetch it. Fetch it.

SCROOGE Now wait. I must stop being so excited. I can't even think properly. *(Very still for a moment.)* Fan, it's too wonderful. Say it again: I'm going home - and I don't have to come back here ever again. You did say that, didn't you? I didn't dream it.

Before FAN can answer a loud voice calls from off:

SCHOOLMASTER Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there - and see it loaded on to the coach.

And the SCHOOLMASTER comes to FAN and SCROOGE THE YOUNGER. He is carrying a decanter of wine and three glasses on a tray. SCROOGE is both fearful and embarrassed by the loudness and the condescension of this SCHOOLMASTER, who stops suddenly.

SCHOOLMASTER Master Scrooge! I suppose we'll have to get used to Mister Scrooge from now on, eh? We're a man, now, aren't we, boy?

SCROOGE Well, yes, sir, I - I.

SCHOOLMASTER I've seen many change from Master to Mister in my time.

Stop