

Christmas Past

bell tolls one. Pause. Scrooge looks out of his curtains.)

SCROOGE. Nobody. Good! *(He shuts his curtains again. Dim light. Bad curtains at the foot of the bed fly open. Scrooge sits up, terrified. Curtains on the right, then the left fly open. Scrooge doesn't know what to do. There is a change of light, into a dazzling brilliance. It is quick, like a pistol shot. A hand reaches between the curtains behind Scrooge's head and whips them open. Scrooge crawls down to the floor of his bed and stares at the apparition at its head. Revealed is a strange figure, the Ghost of Christmas Past. He is a man in white, ascetic and stern, with skin pink and healthy but with long, snow white hair that hangs down his back. He seems ageless. He holds a branch of green holly in his hands, but he is draped all over with beautiful summer flowers. Most astonishing of all is the incredible brilliance of the light that surrounds the Ghost of Christmas Past now when he appears and will later, when from time to time, he will point things out to Scrooge. It might be an almost audience-blinking light, like a klieg light, or a lighthouse Fresnel searchlight. Now, it is blinding Scrooge.)* Ah! I can't see! *(The light returns to normal.)*

SOX

CHRISTMAS PAST. Is that better?
SCROOGE. Yes. You blinded me.
CHRISTMAS PAST. The light I bring you is bright, for it must see into very dark places.
SCROOGE. Are you the spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?
CHRISTMAS PAST. I am!
SCROOGE. Who and what are you?
CHRISTMAS PAST. I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.
SCROOGE. Long past?
CHRISTMAS PAST. No, your past.
SCROOGE. Why are you here?
CHRISTMAS PAST. Your welfare.
SCROOGE. Thank you very much, but the best thing for me would be a good night's sleep.
CHRISTMAS PAST. Your reclamation then!
SCROOGE. Reclamation? From what?
CHRISTMAS PAST. From yourself! Rise and walk with me. *(The light again, blinding Scrooge again, who jumps out of bed, stands shivering in his night gown and cap.)*

SCROOGE. I can't see!
CHRISTMAS PAST. You will! Take my hand.
SCROOGE. Where are we going?
CHRISTMAS PAST. Give me your hand. *(Scrooge gives the Ghost of Christmas Past his hand. Darkness. Music. Scrooge's house moves off. Whirling lights. Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Past seem to fly through the air as the lights whirl around them. For a second, the brilliant light. Then normal light. The bedroom has disappeared. Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Past stand by crossroads signs, larger than life, pointing four ways. A Boy, Scrooge as a Boy, with a book, stands behind the window of a schoolroom looking at the signs. In the background appear trees and clouds. Music ends.)*

SCROOGE. Good heavens! The crossroads!
CHRISTMAS PAST. You remember it?
SCROOGE. Of course! That way was — school — and that way was — the town and — why, that way was home! I was born here! I was a boy in this place! *(Enter Orson and Valentine. They are racing to the crossroads, from school. Scrooge as a Boy leaves his window and runs after them.)* *Scrooge*
ORSON. I'll get there first!
VALENTINE. No, you won't, Orson!
ORSON. I will, Valentine!
SCROOGE AS A BOY. No, I will!!!
ORSON and VALENTINE. Ebenezer!
SCROOGE. There I am! *(Orson almost gets to the sign, reaches out to touch it. Valentine grabs him and pulls him back, tries to touch it himself. Scrooge as a Boy grabs him and pulls him back. Their game is to keep each other from touching the sign post, until all, piling on top of each other, grab the sign post. Scrooge as a Boy first.)*
ORSON. I got it!
VALENTINE. *(Simultaneous.)* I got it!
SCROOGE AS A BOY. *(Simultaneous.)* I got it! *(They all collapse on top of each other in affectionate roughhouse, in front of Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Past.)*
VALENTINE. I win!
ORSON. No, I win!!
SCROOGE AS A BOY. We all win!!!