

Act 4
Scrooges
Mother

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

99

(SCROOGE tries to reply but cannot. He watches spellbound.)

Even in two bits and all battered and locked away in a cupboard. But you kept it sir. Even though you didn't know you did sir. Even though you forgot it was even there sir. Some part of you, some tiny beating part of you, could not bear to lose it. And that makes all the difference. You kept it old Scrooge! Doesn't that bring hope to the whole rolling world sir? That a Scrooge can love stories? That a Scrooge can have a heart? Even though he doesn't know it? Doesn't it, Tiny Tim? My dear one. (He looks up.) What shall we read? (He turns the pages.) I know. How about – your favourite?

SCROOGE. (whispers) Ali Baba.

CRATCHIT. Ali Baba. And the Cave of Treasures. And so I will Tiny Tim. But we always like reading this bit first don't we?

(SCROOGE stretches his hand and opens the book simultaneously with CRATCHIT. Very tenderly, they reveal the title page.)

(reads) "This book is for you my sweet darling boy. A book of treasures to guide your life. And if I –"

(SCROOGE'S MOTHER appears from the shadows.)

SCROOGE'S MOTHER. – cannot remain with thee as the doctors tell me I must not, then know how very dearly I would do if I could, and how very nearly did I see this one Christmas with you – your first ever Christmas – that I know now I will not. How many many Christmases would I spend with you if I could. Just one more hour of life with you would be the dearest gift, no earthly riches could compare. But since I cannot, know that I will look over you and will love you always as I always did from the first sweet breath you drew. And do so now and always will forever. And forever. With my eternal blessing. Your mother. Seventeen hundred and seventy-seven. Christmas.