

Actor 5
MR. GRIMES

Int. Grimes Academy – Christmas Eve.

(ACTOR 3 pulls on [or becomes] a desk. She is also the voice of MRS. GRIMES. MR. GRIMES enters. Black frock coat with cane.)

GRIMES. Scrooge?

SCROOGE. Mr. Grimes!

(Enter ACTOR 2 as LITTLE SCROOGE, aged eight. He is poring over an exercise book. [He could be a mask or puppet.])

GRIMES. I said Scrooge!

LITTLE SCROOGE. (looks up, flinches) Yes sir. Mr. Grimes sir.

GRIMES. I have heard from your father. He cannot take you home. So you must spend Christmas at the school.

LITTLE SCROOGE. Yes sir.

GRIMES. A burden and toil for me and Mrs. Grimes but there we are. Don't expect any Christmas jollities from us sir.

LITTLE SCROOGE. No sir.

GRIMES. No fine plump turkey sir! Chestnut stuffing, roast potatoes, brussel sprouts or gravy sir! Gruel will be thy fare sir.

LITTLE SCROOGE. Yes sir.

GRIMES. Ain't that right Mrs. Grimes?

MRS. GRIMES. (offstage) Gru-el! Quite right, Mr. Grimes!

MR. GRIMES. You have something to occupy you?

LITTLE SCROOGE. My mathematics sir.

GRIMES. Mathematics. Good.

(GRIMES turns the pages with his cane. Whacks down with it.)

Compound interest, boy! Compound! Divide boy! Divide!

LITTLE SCROOGE. Yes sir.

GRIMES. Stupid witless pointless child!

(He lashes the page as he shouts. LITTLE SCROOGE flinches. SCROOGE flinches too. The GHOST quietly watches the scene, watches SCROOGE watching. GRIMES spots something else. Another book beneath the exercise book.)

What's this?

LITTLE SCROOGE. *(tries to hide it)* Nothing sir.

(GRIMES nudges aside the maths book with his cane. He reveals hidden beneath it an old leather-bound volume. It is a story book. He turn the pages. Each one reveals a picture.)

GRIMES. Robin Hood –

(turns page) Robinson Crusoe –

(turns page) Jack the Giant Killer!

(turns page) Ali Baba!! Open Sesame!??

(whacks the book) A STORY BOOK!!?

Paltry pointless *STORIES SIR!!?*

(whacks again) Where d'yer get this?

(LITTLE SCROOGE says nothing.)

Speak up boy! Who gave it yer?

LITTLE SCROOGE. Don't remember sir.

GRIMES. Well we'll have a little look shall we?

(He grabs the book. Picks it up.)

LITTLE SCROOGE. No sir, please sir –

GRIMES. *QUIET!*

(turns first page) Ah yes. Here we are.

(reads) "This book is for you my sweet darling boy.
A book of treasures for your life. And if I cannot –"

LITTLE SCROOGE. I beg sir, please sir!

(GRIMES leers into the BOY's face.)

GRIMES. O my sweeeet! My darling boy! My little treasure!
Aaaaaaah! Little wussy pussy diddums! Who wrote
this muck boy?

LITTLE SCROOGE. No-one sir.

GRIMES. Well they can't help you now can they boy?
Wherever they are! Little pretty pictures! little fairy
stories! *(He whacks the desk.)* FILTH! Vile pointless
FILTH!!! I'll give you "Open Sesame" boy.

*(GRIMES holds the book up so LITTLE SCROOGE can
see, then slowly and deliberately tears the book down the
spine into two pieces. LITTLE SCROOGE and SCROOGE
both flinch. GRIMES throws the pieces back on the desk.)*

NOW GET RID OF IT!! Lock it away! Out of the light
of day for ever!

LITTLE SCROOGE. Yes sir.

GRIMES. *(Whack!)* Again.

LITTLE SCROOGE. Yes sir!

GRIMES. *(Whack!)* Again.

LITTLE SCROOGE. Yes sir!

GRIMES. Good!

MRS. GRIMES. *(offstage)* GRIMES!!!! Whatchoo doin' in there!?

GRIMES. Coming my little petal. My little snowdrop. My
little tiny little – *(chuckling fawningly)* – mousekin...

(To LITTLE SCROOGE) Geron on wi' yer work, boy!

(GRIMES exits, chuckling and fawning.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Do you recall this book
Mr. Scrooge?

(SCROOGE says nothing.)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. It looked beautiful.

SCROOGE. No memory of it.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Not the sweetest of men, Mr.
Grimes.

SCROOGE. It's what I deserved. Made me the man I am
sir.

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST. Madam.

SCROOGE. Whatever you are.

*(Music: ACTORS offstage sing "THE COVENTRY
CAROL")*