

PART II: THE FIRST OF THE THREE GHOSTS

4 When Scrooge woke up, it was very dark. A clock struck twelve! Scrooge suddenly remembered, “Another ghost is coming at one o’clock.” He decided to lie awake until after one o’clock.

He waited and waited until at last he heard the clock strike One. At that moment, a light flashed[•] in the room. And the curtains round his bed flew open[•].

Scrooge, sat up, and found himself face to face[•] with a ghost.

It was very strange. It was the height of a child but it looked like an old man.

Its long hair was white like an old man’s, but there were no wrinkles[•] on its face. It wore a white tunic. And a bright jet[•] of light beamed[•] out from the top of its head. It held a big cap under its arm.

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- **beamed:** shone; came out of
 - **face to face:** looking at
 - **flashed:** shone suddenly
 - **flew open:** opened quickly and suddenly

- **jet:** strong, thin line
- **wrinkles:** lines on people’s faces showing age

“Are you the ghost that Marley told me about?” asked Scrooge.

“I am!”

“Who are you?” Scrooge continued.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.”

“Why have you come?” asked Scrooge.

“For your welfare!” said the Ghost. “Now stand up and walk with me!”

When Scrooge saw the Ghost move towards the window, he was frightened. “I’m a mortal, •” said Scrooge, “I’ll fall.”

The Ghost laid • its hand on Scrooge’s heart and said, “You won’t fall!”

As it spoke, they passed through the wall. And they stood on a country road. There was no mist • or darkness now. It was a clear, cold, winter’s day. And there was snow on the ground.

“Good Heavens •!” said Scrooge, as he looked about him. “I grew up • here. I was a boy here!”

They walked along the road. And Scrooge recognised every tree and every gate. Some ponies • were trotting • towards them with boys on their backs. All these boys were happy and shouting to each other.

Glossary

- **Good Heavens!:** I’m surprised
- **grew up:** (here) passed my years as a child
- **laid:** (v. to lay) placed; put
- **mist:** fine vapour like a low cloud
- **mortal:** person; human (can’t live forever)
- **ponies:** small horses
- **trotting:** moving (slowly) of horse

“They are only shadows,” said the Ghost. “They can’t see us.”

Scrooge knew all the boys. But why was he so happy to see them? Why was he happy when they called Merry Christmas to each other? What was Merry Christmas to Scrooge? “What good has it ever done me?” he asked himself.



“The school is not quite empty,” said the Ghost. “One child is still there.”

“I know,” said Scrooge with a tear in his eye.

They soon came to a large, red-brick building. They entered the gloomy hall and walked to a door at the back of the building. It opened before them, and they saw a long, empty classroom. At one of the desks a lonely boy was reading a book. Scrooge sat down on a bench and wept when he saw himself.



“I wish,” Scrooge muttered, after drying his eyes with his sleeve, “but it’s too late now.”

“What’s the matter?” asked the Ghost.

“Nothing,” said Scrooge. “There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I would like to give him some money. That’s all.”

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and said, “Let’s see another Christmas!”

Glossary

- **red-brick:** 
- **tear:** water from your eye when you cry
- **wept:** (v. to weep) cried
- **What’s the matter:** What is the problem?

THE BOY

Who do you think the boy is?
Why does Scrooge cry?

They left the school behind them, and a moment later they were in a busy city. It was Christmas time again but it was evening.

The Ghost stopped at a warehouse door.

“Do you recognize this place?” asked the Ghost.

“I was an apprentice here!” said Scrooge.

They went in. Scrooge saw an old gentleman sitting behind a high desk. “It’s old Fezziwig!” he said, excitedly. Old Fezziwig rubbed his hands and laughed. Then he called out in a rich, fat, cheerful voice, “Ebenezer! Dick!” Scrooge’s former self, now a young man, came quickly into the room, with Dick, the other apprentice.

“Dick Wilkins!” said Scrooge to the Ghost. “There he is. We were very good friends.”

“My boys!” said Fezziwig. “No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let’s close the shutters,” cried old Fezziwig.

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- **apprentice:** person working and learning how to do a job
 - **cheerful:** happy
 - **former self:** person (he) was when he was younger
 - **rubbed his hands:** moved his hands together (usually when you are happy)
 - **shutters:** wooden or metal covers on the outside of a window
 - **warehouse:** large building to store goods in

The two young men ran into the street and closed the shutters.

“Clear everything away”, boys. Let’s make some room for the party!”

It was done in a minute. They washed the floor. They put coal on the fire and soon the warehouse was the cosiest, warmest, brightest ballroom. In came a fiddler with a music book. In came Mrs Fezziwig, with a big smile on her face. In came the three pretty Miss Fezziwigs. In came the six young men whose hearts they broke. In came all Mr Fezziwig’s employees. In they all came, one after another. And soon there were twenty couples dancing round the room. There were dances, and there were games, and more dances. And there was cake, and there was beef, and there were mince pies and lots of beer. When the clock struck eleven, the party finished. Mr and Mrs Fezziwig stood by the door. They said goodbye to everybody as they left. And they wished them a Merry Christmas. For the whole time, Scrooge imagined he was in the scene with his former self. He remembered everything and enjoyed everything.

“It was so easy,” said the Ghost, “to make these people happy.”

“Easy?!” repeated Scrooge.

The Ghost told Scrooge to listen to the two apprentices. They were praising Fezziwig. And then he said, “He has only spent a few pounds of your mortal money. Does he really deserve all this praise?”

Glossary

- **ballroom:** place where you dance
- **beef:** meat from a cow
- **brightest:** with most light and life
- **clear away:** make space; tidy up
- **cosiest:** most comfortable and like home
- **deserve:** merit
- **fiddler:** person who plays the violin
- **praising:** saying nice things about



Scrooge was angry at the Ghost's remark^o. "It isn't about money, Ghost," he said, speaking like the young Scrooge. He has the power^o to make us happy or unhappy. He can make our work easy or difficult. The happiness he gives is worth a fortune in gold." Then suddenly Scrooge stopped talking.

"What's the matter?" asked the Ghost.

"Nothing," said Scrooge.

"There's something wrong" the Ghost continued.

"No," said Scrooge, "No. I would like to be able to talk to my clerk now. That's all."

As Scrooge spoke, his former self turned down^o the lamps. And Scrooge and the Ghost stood side by side^o in the open air.

"I haven't got much time left," said the Ghost. "Quick!"

Scrooge saw himself again. He was older now. And his face showed signs of greed^o.

He was not alone. He was sitting by a pretty young girl. There were tears in her eyes.

"Belle," Scrooge said quietly.

Glossary

- **greed:** when you want more than you need
- **power:** strength; ability
- **remark:** words; what he said
- **side by side:** next to each other
- **turned down:** made the light less bright

“Another idol • has replaced • me,” Belle said, softly.

“What idol has replaced you?”

“A golden one,” replied Belle. “I’ve seen you lose all your good ambitions •. And now all you are interested in is making money.”



BELLE

What is the relationship between Belle and Scrooge?
What is the idol that has replaced her?

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- **ambitions:** goals; plans
 - **idol:** a person or thing that is loved and admired; false god
 - **replaced:** substituted; taken the place of

After Reading

Comprehension

1 Are the following sentences True (T) or False (F)? Tick (✓).

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Marley wasn't dead at the beginning of the story. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Scrooge's nephew thinks Christmas is a time to be generous and kind. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Poor people were happy to go and stay in the workhouses. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) When Marley was alive, he didn't help the poor. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) The Ghost of Christmas Past never gets old. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Mr Fezziwig was very kind to his employees. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Money was more important to the young Scrooge than Belle. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Scrooge was happy because he didn't marry Belle. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) The Ghost of Christmas Present shows him a grave. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Scrooge doesn't want Tiny Tim to die. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) Scrooge didn't enjoy seeing the party at his nephew's house. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| l) The Ghost of Christmas Future never speaks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| m) Scrooge realizes he doesn't want to die a lonely sad old man. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| n) In the end, Scrooge becomes very generous and helps Bob Cratchit. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Match the two halves of the sentences to sum up the story.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>a) <input type="checkbox"/> At the beginning of the story Scrooge is</p> <p>b) <input type="checkbox"/> His dead partner, Jacob Marley, visits him</p> <p>c) <input type="checkbox"/> Three ghosts haunt him</p> <p>d) <input type="checkbox"/> The three ghosts show him</p> <p>e) <input type="checkbox"/> In the end, Scrooge changes</p> | <p>1 and teach him a lesson.</p> <p>2 his unhappy life and the mistakes he has made.</p> <p>3 a mean miserable rich old man.</p> <p>4 and his kindness saves Tiny Tim's life.</p> <p>5 and warns him to be kind and to help people.</p> |
|---|---|

3 When does Scrooge say the following? Match.

a) There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I would like to give him some money.

b) I would like to be able to talk to my clerk now.

c) She could be my daughter.

d) I am not the man I was. I will be a different man.

e) I understand. This unhappy man could be me.

f) Oh, no, kind Ghost! Say he will live.

At the visit to

- 1 Bob Cratchit's on Christmas Day.
- 2 the shop.
- 3 the graveyard.
- 4 Mr Fezziwig's warehouse where Scrooge worked.
- 5 Belle's house.
- 6 Scrooge's old school.

