

Chapter 13

Tiny Tim

The ghost did not speak and Scrooge took hold of the black robe. They moved on again. They moved through streets which Scrooge recognised. But he could not see himself anywhere. He had seen himself in his past life as a child and as a young man. But he could not see himself in the future.

The ghost stopped in front of a house which Scrooge recognised. It was Bob Cratchit's house.

Scrooge saw Mrs Cratchit and the children inside the house. They were all very quiet. Mrs Cratchit and her daughters were sewing. They were making black clothes. So Scrooge knew that someone had died. Peter was reading the Bible aloud. He was reading a story about Jesus and a little child, and he was crying.

Peter stopped reading. 'Father is late again tonight,' he said.

All the children looked sad.

'Father walked home quickly when Tiny Tim was alive,' said Mrs Cratchit quietly. 'He loved to carry Tiny Tim on his shoulders.'

When Bob arrived home, the children all ran to meet him at the door. Bob looked at the black clothes. 'Have you finished making them?' he asked. 'Will our clothes be ready to wear at the funeral on Sunday? I have been to the church today. I have made arrangements for Tiny Tim's funeral.'

Then he sat down and cried.

At last, Bob went upstairs. Tiny Tim's body was lying on a bed. Bob sat next to the bed and he looked at his dead son. Then he smiled. He kissed Tiny Tim's little face and he went downstairs again.

The Cratchit family sat next to the fire and talked. 'Mr Scrooge's nephew spoke very kindly to me. He was sad to hear about Tiny Tim,' said Bob.

'He said he will help us. He will give Peter a job.'

'Yes, Peter is nearly twelve now. He must have a job,' said Mrs Cratchit.

'The children will all need jobs soon.'

'We must always remember Tiny Tim,' said Bob. 'He was a good child and a happy child. Promise me that you will always remember him.'

They all promised.

Scrooge watched the sad family. Then he spoke to the ghost. 'I think that you will soon leave me,' he said. 'You have shown me many things. But please tell me, who was the man who died?'

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come pointed past

Scrooge and they moved on again. They went back to the part of London that Scrooge knew well. They passed the building which had 'Scrooge and Marley' written above the door

'Stop, Ghost,' said Scrooge.

But the ghost kept on moving. Scrooge ran hinc". to look through the window into his office. The room was the same, but there was different furniture. And the man sitting in the room was not Scrooge!

Scrooge ran back to the ghost. Soon they arrived at a church

The ghost went through the gates into the churchyard. It moved past many gravestones. Then it stopped and pointed down at a grave.

Scrooge was frightened, very frightened. At last, he looked at the name on the gravestone: EBENEZER SCROOGE.

No, Ghost! Oh, no, no!' he cried. But the ghost pointed at Scrooge, then pointed at the ground.

'Listen to me,' cried Scrooge, taking hold of the ghost's black robe. 'You have shown me many terrible things. Are they all going to happen? Can I stop them from happening?'

Scrooge fell onto his knees in front of the ghost. 'You are a good ghost, aren't you? You are here to help me, aren't you? All three of you came to help me.



At last, Scrooge looked at the name on the gravestone.

'I will live a better life. I will care about people. I will care about Christmas. I will think about the Past, the Present and the Future. Please tell me that these things will not happen.'

Scrooge tried to hold the ghost's robe. But suddenly he was back in his bedroom. He was holding one of the wooden posts at the end of his bed.