

## Excerpt 1 - The First of the Three Spirits

When Scrooge awoke, it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and there was no noise of people in the streets.

Marley's ghost bothered him. He didn't know whether it was a dream or not. Then he remembered that a spirit should visit him at one o'clock. So Scrooge decided to lie awake and wait.

Suddenly, the clock struck one. Light flashed up in the room and a small hand drew back the curtains of his bed. Then Scrooge found himself face to face with the visitor. It was a strange figure – like a child: but also like an old man. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it.

“Who, and what are you?” Scrooge asked the ghost.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past. Rise and come with me.”

The ghost took Scrooge back in time, to a place where Scrooge was a boy. There Scrooge could see his younger self playing with other children. They were cheerfully running around the Christmas tree; and although they were poor, they had lots of fun.

The spirit also took Scrooge to a warehouse, where Scrooge was an apprentice. Scrooge saw the merry Christmas Eve they spent in the office with their boss and his family. There was food and music and dancing and everybody was happy.

Then the spirit took Scrooge to yet another place. Scrooge was older now. He was not alone, but sat by the side of a beautiful young girl, Belle. There were tears in her eyes.

“It is sad to see,” she said, softly. “that another love has displaced me – the love of gold. Your heart was full of love once, but now ...? I think it is better for us to part. May you be happy in the life you have chosen.”

“Spirit,” said Scrooge, “show me no more. Take me home. Why do you torture me?”

“One shadow more,” said the ghost.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. There was a happy family celebrating Christmas with all their warmth and heartiness. Scrooge recognised Belle, his former girlfriend. She was married now and had children.

“Belle,” said her husband with a smile, “I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon. Mr Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could see him there. His partner is dying, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.”

“Spirit,” said Scrooge in a broken voice, “Take me back! I cannot bear it any longer.”

He struggled with the ghost to take him back. And finally Scrooge found himself in his own bed again. He was very exhausted and sank into a heavy sleep.

## Excerpt 2 - The Second of the Three Spirits

Scrooge woke up in the middle of a snore, just before the clock struck one again. He sat up in his bed and waited for the second ghost to come. And there it was – the Ghost of Christmas Present. It had curly brown hair, sparkling eyes and it wore a simple green robe with white fur. Its feet were bare and on its head it wore a holly wreath.

The ghost took Scrooge to Bob Cratchit's house – a very poor little dwelling. In the kitchen you could see Mrs Cratchit preparing Christmas dinner. Her children were cheerfully running around. Then the door opened and Bob Cratchit came in with Tiny Tim upon his shoulders. Tiny Tim was Bob Cratchit's youngest son. He bore a little crutch and had an iron frame around his limbs.

“On our way home, Tiny Tim told me that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple. It might be pleasant to them to remember on Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.” Bob's voice trembled when he said this.

Then Christmas dinner was ready, and everyone sat down at the table. As the Cratchits were very poor, it was not much they had for Christmas dinner. But still everyone was joyful and you could feel that they all had the Christmas Spirit in their hearts.

“A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears! God bless us!” said Bob Cratchit.

“God bless us every one!” said Tiny Tim.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his little hand, as if he feared to lose him.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge, who felt sorry for the boy, “tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”

“I see an empty seat,” replied the ghost, “and a crutch without an owner. If these shadows don't change in the future, the child will die.”

This made Scrooge very sad, but the spirit went on and took Scrooge to his nephew's house. Fred and his friends had a very cheerful party and played games. Scrooge really enjoyed their party and wanted to stay for another while but in a second it all faded and Scrooge and the spirit were again on their travels.

They visited many homes in many places: they saw sick people who were cheerful; people in foreign lands who were close at home, poor people who felt rich that day – all because of the Christmas Spirit.

Suddenly, Scrooge noticed something strange about the ghost. Two children-like figures were at the ghost's feet – a boy and a girl. But, they looked old and dreadful, like little monsters. Scrooge was shocked.

“Spirit, are they your creatures?” Scrooge asked.

“They are Man's creatures,” said the spirit “The boy is Ignorance. The girl is Want. Beware them both, but most of all beware this boy” said the spirit.

“Have they no place they can go?” asked Scrooge.

“Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?” the spirit turned on Scrooge with his own words.

The bell struck twelve. The Ghost of Christmas Present disappeared. And at the last stroke of the bell, Scrooge saw the third ghost coming towards him.

### Excerpt 3 - The Last of the Spirits

Slowly and silently the ghost came nearer. It was very tall and wore a deep black piece of clothing, which covered its whole body and left nothing of it visible but one outstretched hand.

“Are you the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?” asked Scrooge, “I fear you more than any other spirit.”

The ghost did not say a word, and Scrooge was really scared. They wandered through the city and Scrooge heard some men talking about a person who had died. Scrooge knew the men and wanted to find out, whom they were talking about. But the spirit moved on.

They next stopped in an area where thieves and liars lived. They had stolen things with them and made fun of the person who once owned those things.

“Ha, ha!” laughed a woman, “He frightened everybody away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!”

After that, the ghost led Scrooge through streets that were familiar to him; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit’s house and found the mother and the children by the fire. Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues. When Bob Cratchit came in, the children hurried to greet him. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid their little cheeks against his face as if to say, “Don’t mind it, father. Don’t be sad.”

“You went there today?” said his wife.

“Yes, my dear,” returned Bob. “I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green the place is. But you’ll see it often. I promised him that we would walk there every Sunday. My little, little child.” cried Bob. “My little child.”

He broke down in tears. He couldn't help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

The ghost moved on and took Scrooge to a churchyard. The spirit stood among the graves and pointed down to one. Scrooge slowly went towards it and following the ghost's finger read upon the stone of the grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.

"Spirit!" Scrooge cried, "hear me. I am not the man I was! I will not be the man I must have been so far! Why show me this if I am past all hope? Good Spirit, I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the past, the present, and the future. The spirits of all three shall be within me. I will not ignore the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me that I may change my fate!"

Full of fear, Scrooge caught the spirit's hand. But the spirit suddenly changed – it shrunk and faded and finally turned into a bedpost.