

Reading *A Christmas Carol*

Chapter 2 – The first and second ghost



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 what happens.

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: yet

not so like a child as 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 worked. Scrooge saw the merry Christmas Eve they spent in the office with their boss Mr Fezziwig 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 money. 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? Take me back! I cannot bear it any longer."

And suddenly, Scrooge found himself in his own bed again. He was very tired and sank into a heavy sleep.

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. He was a very sweet boy, although he was not very fit or healthy. His parents worried about him a lot.

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 the spirit took Scrooge home, where it was cold, and empty.

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.