

## Reading *A Christmas Carol*

### Chapter 3 – The last ghost and the end of it

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. “Ha, ha!” laughed one of them, “He frightened everybody away from him when he was alive, I’m glad he’s dead! Ha, ha, ha!” Scrooge knew the men and wanted to find out who they were talking about. But the spirit moved on.

The ghost 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 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 not ignore the lessons that the spirits have taught me. 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.

Yes! And the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own, and he could make the best of it.

Scrooge got out of bed. "I don't know what to do! I am as happy as an angel!" he said. "I don't know what day of the month it is. I don't know how long I've been among the spirits. Hello! Hey there!"

He ran to the window, opened it, and put out his head.

"What's today?" cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes.

"Today?" replied the boy. "Why, Christmas Day!"

"It's Christmas Day!" said Scrooge to himself. "I haven't missed it! The spirits have done it all in one night. Hey, boy! Here is a coin for you. Go and buy the biggest turkey you can find! Come back with the turkey and the man who sold it and you'll get another coin!"

The boy ran off like a shot.

"I'll send it to Bob Cratchit," whispered Scrooge cheerfully. "It'll be twice the size of Tiny Tim."

He dressed himself all in his best, and at last got out into the streets. Scrooge then went to church, and walked through the streets, and watched the people. He had never dreamed that anything could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he went to his nephew's house, where they all had a wonderful party.

The next day, Scrooge was not angry at Bob Cratchit for wanting the day off for Christmas. Instead, he raised his salary!

Bob Cratchit was very surprised, and so were many people who found Scrooge so changed. Scrooge became a better person. To Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father.

It was always said of Scrooge, that he knew how to keep Christmas well. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim would say, God bless us, every one!

