

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL REVISION



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class teacher \_\_\_\_\_

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How to use this booklet:

***In this booklet you will find character explorations, key quotations, paired quotations, motif quotations, and then lots of extracts from each stave.***

***Each quotation in the extract pages is annotated with what you can say about it.***

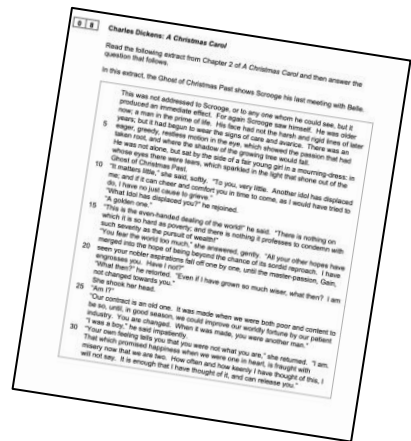
***You need to learn quotations but it is even more important to learn what you actually say about them! Use this booklet as a textbook to help you to make mindmaps, flashcards, lists, practice essays, and any other form of revision you find helpful.***

***It is better to use the analysis you find in here than the analysis you can find online or in other textbooks.***

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# IN THE EXAM...

Your **A Christmas Carol** question is section B of your first paper. It comes after your Macbeth question. You will receive an extract for this question but also be expected to memorise parts of the text, as you are asked to talk about the extract **and** the text as a whole.



## How many marks do I get for this question?

This is a 30 mark question, with no additional marks for SPAG.

## How do I write this response?

You will need a thesis and three paragraphs. The best way of writing this essay is in chronological order, with the extract analysis inserted into the essay wherever it would fall chronologically. **Remember you have a How to Write an Essay booklet too!**

## How many times do I refer to the extract?

You must use the extract at least once in your response but you do not need to have a certain percentage of your essay that responds to the extract. Even just one quotation will suffice - you just cannot ignore it completely. The question will say 'starting with this extract' but they just mean in your head, not in your essay!

## How many quotations should I learn?

There is no right or wrong answer here – learn more about Scrooge than anybody else. It can be helpful to learn a certain number for each stave too.

## How long should I spend on this question?

The exam is 1hr45 minutes, so it is wise to plan for 5 minutes or so then spend 45 minutes writing your 30-mark response.

## How do I revise for this question?

Learn your quotations and what to say about them, mind-maps for characters, learn your key vocabulary, write practice essays and have them marked by your teacher, re-read the text, re-annotate blank extracts, quotation explosions, write a quotation on one side of a flashcard and what you will say about it on the other, avoid Youtube videos!

# ALL KEY QUOTATIONS

STAVE ONE	STAVE TWO	STAVE THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solitary as an oyster</li> <li>• Hard and sharp as flint</li> <li>• Darkness is cheap and Scrooge liked it</li> <li>• Squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner</li> <li>• The cold within him froze his old features</li> <li>• Made his eyes red, his thin lips blue</li> <li>• No child asked him what it was o'clock</li> <li>• No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle</li> <li>• Keep his eye upon his clerk</li> <li>• Scrooge kept the coal box in his own room.</li> <li>• The clerk's fire was so very much smaller</li> <li>• Dismal little cell</li> <li>• Decrease the surplus population</li> <li>• Are there no prisons?</li> <li>• It is not my business</li> <li>• I can't afford to make idle people merry</li> <li>• Scrooge took his usual melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern</li> <li>• The ancient tower of a church... peeping slyly down at Scrooge</li> <li>• I wear the chain I forg'd in life</li> <li>• You were always a good man of business / mankind was my business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bright clear jet of light</li> <li>• Like a child yet not so like a child as like an old man</li> <li>• A solitary child neglected by his friends</li> <li>• A lonely boy was reading by a feeble fire</li> <li>• A long, bare, melancholy room</li> <li>• Father is so much kinder than he used to be</li> <li>• Another idol has displaced me... a golden one</li> <li>• A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves</li> <li>• There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake</li> <li>• There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye.</li> <li>• the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.</li> <li>• Though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was clothed in one simple green robe</li> <li>• An antique scabbard with no sword</li> <li>• Its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice</li> <li>• Twice-turned gown</li> <li>• Brave in ribbons</li> <li>• Yearned to show his linen in the fashionable parks</li> <li>• Luxurious thoughts of sage and onion</li> <li>• As good as gold and better</li> <li>• He hoped the people saw him in church</li> <li>• Drew around the hearth in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one</li> <li>• Held his withered little hand in his</li> <li>• The family display of glass...two tumblers and a custard cup without a handle</li> <li>• Their shoes were far from being waterproof</li> <li>• Peter might have known and very likely did the inside of a pawnbrokers</li> <li>• I couldn't be angry with him if I tried</li> <li>• Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish</li> <li>• Until you have discovered what the surplus is and where it is</li> </ul>

# ALL KEY QUOTATIONS

STAVE FOUR	STAVE FIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slowly, gravely, silently approached</li> <li>• Scrooge bent down upon his knee</li> <li>• The spirit answered not</li> <li>• Shrouded in a deep black garment</li> <li>• Rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights</li> <li>• Why wasn't he natural in his lifetime</li> <li>• Plundered, bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for</li> <li>• He lay in a dark empty house</li> <li>• A cat was tearing at the door and there was the sound of gnawing rats</li> <li>• Not a man, woman or child to say that he was kind to me in this or that</li> <li>• Lighted cheerfully and hung with Christmas</li> <li>• They drew about the fire</li> <li>• There were signs of some one having been there lately</li> <li>• Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed</li> <li>• It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy</li> <li>• No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold piping for the blood to dance to</li> <li>• Golden sunlight</li> <li>• His broken voice would scarcely answer to his call</li> <li>• I'm quite a baby!</li> <li>• He went to church</li> <li>• Walked about the streets and watched the people</li> <li>• Patted children on the head</li> <li>• Questioned beggars</li> <li>• Looked down into the kitchens of houses</li> <li>• Found that everything could yield him pleasure</li> <li>• He passed the door a dozen times before he had the courage to knock</li> <li>• To Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father</li> <li>• He was so fluttered and glowing with his good intentions</li> </ul>

# PAIRED QUOTATIONS



Stave one vs stave 5



"The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge"	"He went to church"
"No child asked him what it was o'clock"	"He patted children on the head"
"No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle"	"He questioned beggars"
"His stiffened gait"	"He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness."
"The cold within him froze his old features"	"He was so fluttered and glowing with good intentions"
"Decrease the surplus population"	"Walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded everyone with a delighted smile"
"Hard and sharp as flint"	"As light as a feather"

Good pairings



"Solitary as an oyster"

"A solitary child neglected by his friends"

"Ferret eyes"



"Darkness is cheap and Scrooge liked it"

"He lay in a dark, empty house" (Scrooge's body)

"The room was lighted cheerfully and hung with Christmas." (Tim's body)



"Are there no prisons?"

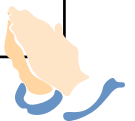
"Oh, no, kind Spirit! say [Tiny Tim] will be spared."

"Two smaller Cratchits came tearing in, screaming"

"The noisy little Cratchits were as still as Statues"

"A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old Sinner"

"Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed"



# KEY MOTIFS



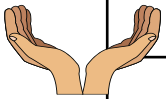
## Eyes

'Made his eyes red' / 'ferret eyes' (Scrooge)	'His eyes sparkled' (Fred)	"An eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye" (Scrooge)	"Its sparkling eye" (Ghost of Christmas Present)
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## Voices

'His grating voice' (Scrooge)	'A cheerful voice' (Fred)	'A comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice' (Fezziwig)	'Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice'	'His broken voice would scarcely answer to his call' (Scrooge S5)
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## Hands

'He was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone'	'Its open hand, its cheery voice' (Ghost of Christmas Present)	'Outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth' (Ghost of Christmas Present)	'Bob held his withered little hand' (Tiny Tim)	'Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed' (Scrooge)
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## The weather

"Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold" (Stave 1)	"It was cold, bleak, biting weather" (Stave 1)	'The clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge" (Stave 1)	"Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm" (S4 Mrs Cratchit)	"Cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky." (S5)
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## Light

"His calves shone like moons" (Fezziwig)	"From the crown of his head there sprung a bright, clear jet of light."	"A jolly giant, glorious to see, bore a glowing torch"	"They found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire"	"No fog, no mist, clear, bright, jovial [...] golden sunlight"
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# KEY VOCABULARY

<u>Character or concept</u>	<u>Word to describe</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Scrooge	Miserly	Unwilling to spend money
	Avaricious	Greedy to the point of evil
	Curmudgeonly	Grumpy or grouchy
	Parsimonious	Unwilling to spend money
Fred	Benevolent	Kind and selfless
	Amiable	Friendly and accommodating
	Magnanimous	Generous and noble
Cratchits	Impoverished	Very poor
	Romanticised	Overly positive in an unrealistic sense
	Micorosm	A small example of a larger concept
GoCPast	Ethereal	Otherworldly
	Ageless	Someone you are unable to tell the age of
GoCPresent	Corporeal	Physically real – having a body
	Sincere	Genuine and kind
	Philanthropic	Generous, especially with money
GoCYTC	Austere	Serious
	Ominous	Mysterious, perhaps evil
	Taciturn	Silent and reserved
Marley's Ghost	Prophetic	Able to predict the future
	Purgatory	The place between heaven and hell
	Repentant	Sorry, apologetic
Victorian Society	Redemption	The act of being saved from hell
	Abundant	A lot of something
	Detached	Unaware of the reality of life



# THE PLOT

1



Meet  
Scrooge



Meet Fred,  
Scrooge's  
nephew



Scrooge goes  
home, eats  
gruel

2



Ghost of  
Christmas Past



Scrooge's boss,  
Fezziwig



Scrooge's break  
up

3



Ghost of  
Christmas  
Present



Walk around  
the streets of  
London



Meet Bob,  
Scrooge's  
clerk



Charity workers



Marley's ghost



Scrooge's  
school



Meet the  
Cratchits



Three other  
Christmases



Ghost of  
Christmas Yet to  
Come



The poor sell  
Scrooge's things



Scrooge sees his  
grave



Scrooge is  
redeemed



Scrooge saves  
Tiny Tim



Fred's party



Ignorance and  
Want



A man (Scrooge)  
has died and  
nobody will go to  
his funeral



Tiny Tim has  
died



Scrooge turns to  
prayer to  
reverse his fate



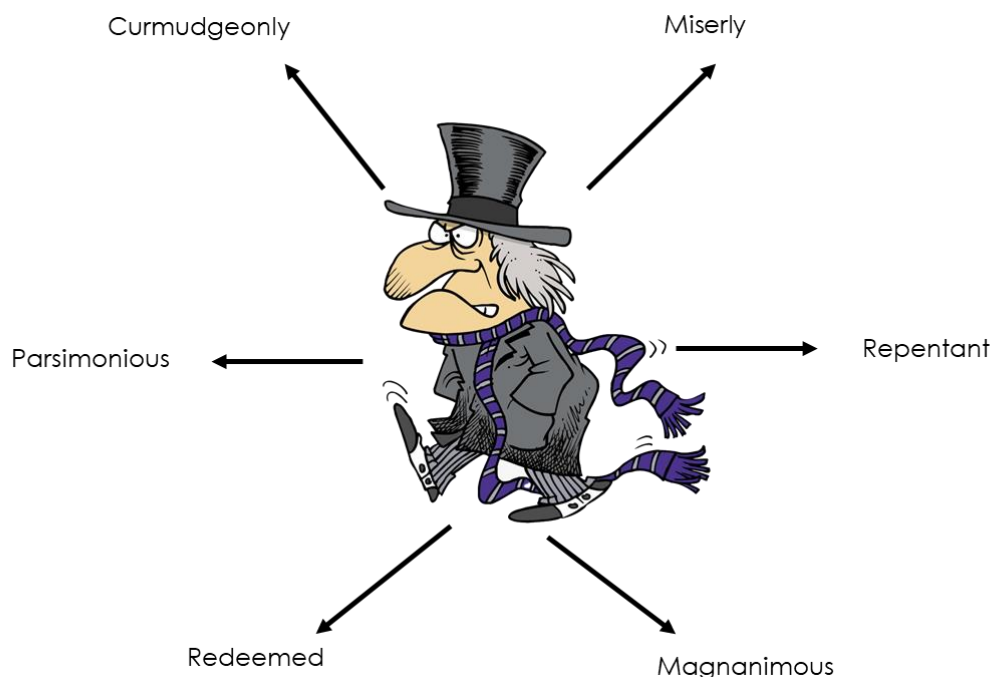
Scrooge gives  
generously to  
others

4

5

# SCROOGE

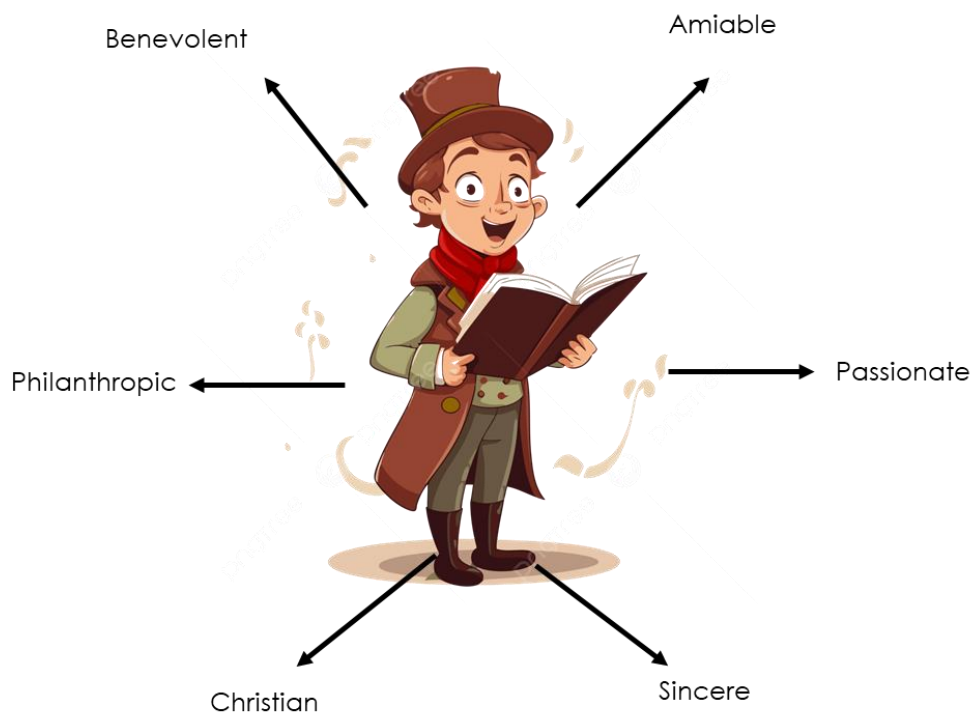
*Scrooge represents all miserly businessmen in Victorian society who do not believe they have a responsibility to care for those less fortunate than them.*



"Hard and sharp as flint" / "Solitary as an oyster"	"No child asked him what it was o'clock" / "No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle"	"Made his eyes red" / "attempted to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes"	"Darkness was cheap and Scrooge liked it"
"I can't afford to make idle people merry"	"Decrease the surplus population"	"You were always a good man of business"	"A lonely boy was reading by a feeble fire"
"Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed"	"I'm light as a feather!"	"He questioned beggars...he patted children on the head"	"He went to church"

# FRED

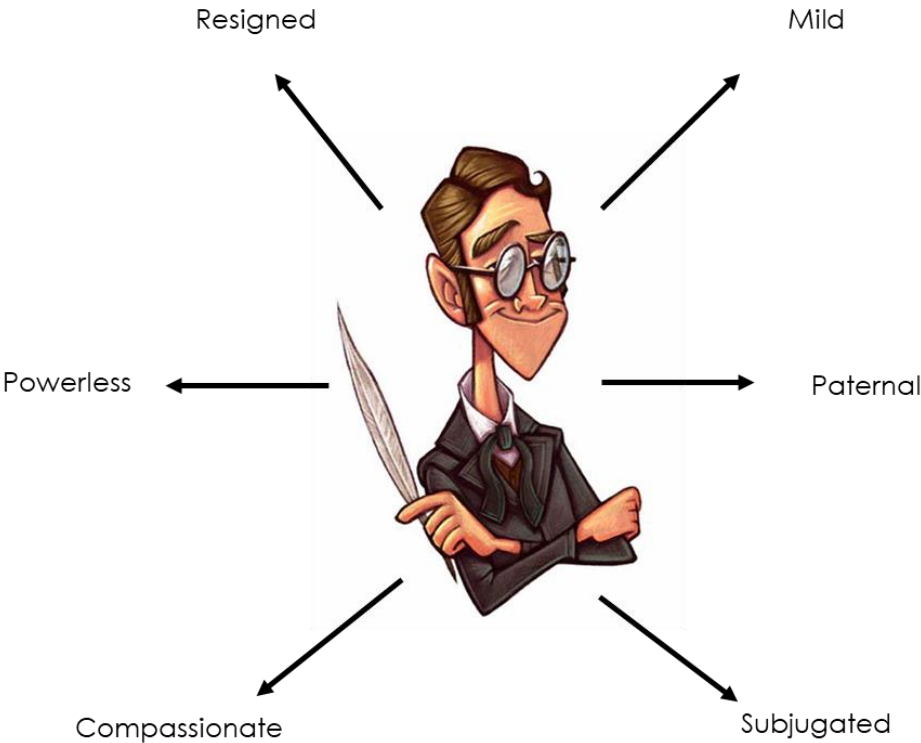
*Fred represents the middle-classes who do understand the true value of social responsibility and human kindness. He is often Dickens' mouthpiece.*



"He was all in a glow" / "Eyes sparkled"	"Open up their shut up hearts freely"	"Fellow passengers to the grave"	"Come dine with us tomorrow!"
"When Scrooge's nephew laughed in this way: holding his sides, rolling his head"	'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,' he said, 'and heartily sorry for your good wife.'	"I shouldn't be at all surprised— mark what I say!— if he got Peter a better situation."	"Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off"

# BOB

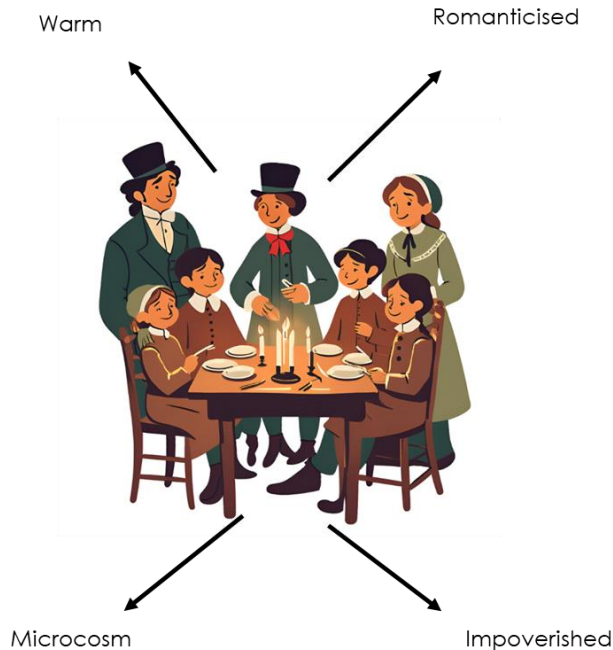
*Bob represents the struggling working classes.*



"Dismal little cell"	"White comforter"	"The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded"	"Went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve"
"Had been Tiny Tim's blood horse all the way home from church"	"Drew around the fire in what Bob Cratchit called a circle meaning half a one"	"Bob held his withered little hand in his"	"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. "It shall not be repeated."

# THE CRATCHITS

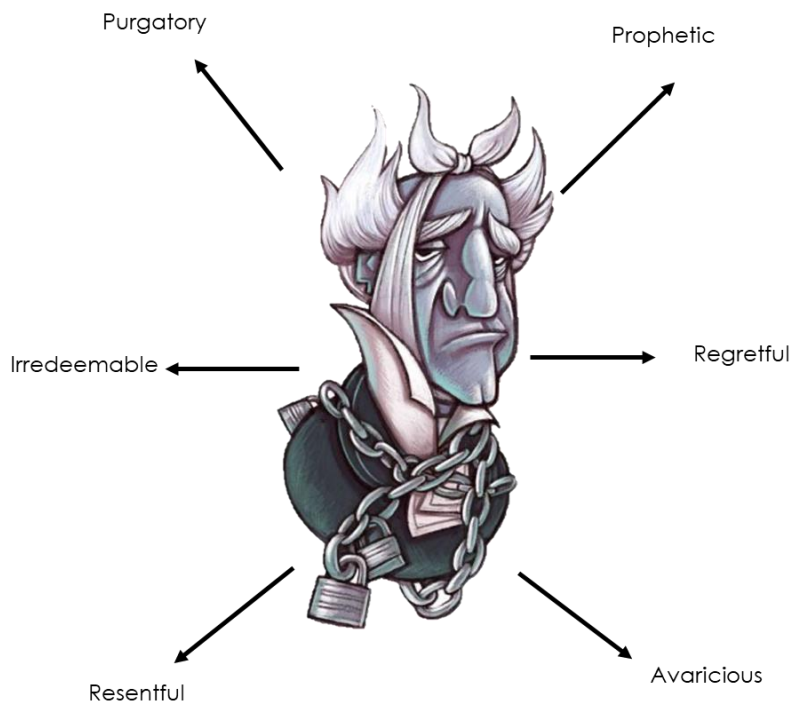
*The Cratchits represent a romanticized version of the 'happy poor' in Victorian society, who struggle financially but find purpose in one another.*



<p>"Brave in ribbons" / "Twice turned gown"</p>	<p>"Their shoes were far from being waterproof"</p>	<p>"Peter might have known and very likely did the inside of a pawnbrokers"</p>	<p>"As good as gold and better"</p>
<p>"The family display of glass, two tumblers and a custard cup without a handle"</p>	<p>"The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner"</p>	<p>"Lighted cheerfully and hung with Christmas"</p>	<p>"They drew about the fire, and talked, the girls and mother working still"</p>

# MARLEY

*Marley's ghost represents miserly businessmen, but as Scrooge does, but he represents those who do not or cannot change and shows the ultimate future for those people.*



"I wear the chain I forg'd in life"	"Mankind was my business"	"I cannot rest I cannot stay I cannot linger anywhere"	'How now!' said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. 'What do you want with me?'
"Cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent"	"Like a bad lobster in a dark cellar"	"It was not angry or ferocious"	"No rest, no peace, incessant torture of remorse"

# STAVE ONE MEET SCROOGE

**Squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching** – all of these words imply a sense of Scrooge *taking* from others. They are all relatively violent words, all associated with using hands to remove things. It suggests that Scrooge loves to take from society – he is a drain on resources.

**Covetous old sinner** – immediately Scrooge is considered unchristian. Our first impression of him is one who shuns the Christian teachings of generosity and kindness. His sin is 'coveting', or wanting more, and the fact he is an 'old sinner' implies a curmudgeonly, grouchy man very much stuck in his own ways. He is a caricature of a Victorian miser.

**A frosty rime was on his head** – there are many references to the cold when we first meet Scrooge. This pathetic fallacy implies that Scrooge's internal frostiness and lack of human warmth implies that this causes a literal cold air around his person. He influences the very air around himself – implying that those like Scrooge control the metaphorical temperature in London for everybody else – actions have consequences for others.

**Hard and sharp as flint** – flint has two significant uses; flint can start fires, and it can be used to make arrowheads and weaponry. It suggests that Scrooge does have the capacity for warmth and kindness if external forces intervene, thus foreshadowing his ultimate transformation. It also suggests though that people like Scrooge are dangerous – their actions have painful consequences on others. He lacks softness and warmth.

**But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.**

**Grating voice** – if someone's voice is 'grating', it is uncomfortable to listen to. This contrasts Fezziwig's 'comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial' voice' – people do not like to listen to Scrooge speak. Every element of himself is horrible for others to encounter.

**Solitary as an oyster** – the 'oyster' is a symbol of closedness; Scrooge's hard outer shell makes it impossible for others to know him. He is lonely and isolated, lacking community support. However, again, 'oysters' open up and contain pearls. This could suggest two things – that Scrooge could open up and be a beautiful, kind contributor to society and if people help Scrooge to open his heart up, there may be beauty inside of him. It also suggests that generosity is what will help Scrooge be a better person – as 'pearls' are very expensive. Giving this 'pearl' to others in the world will allow him to be seen as a better person.

**Red eyes** – Scrooge is almost devilish. He is a monster, a caricature of an evil villain. Many people in the novella have eyes that 'sparkle' – Fred, The Ghost of Christmas Present, Belle etc – and this motif implies to us that those who are good and moral literally shine, like angels. Those who are not have the outward appearance of a hideous monster.



# STAVE ONE SCROOGE'S ISOLATION

**Nobody stopped him in the street** – implies his lack of community; he does not fit in well into Victorian life. He is not approachable, nor is he someone who people warm to naturally or instinctively. It suggests that misers are not welcomed into society by ordinary citizens – money does not buy community

**No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle** – the fact that even the most desperate in society will not ask him for help shows us just how unapproachable he is. A 'trifle' is a small amount, and they will not even ask him for this. It suggests that his lack of approachability prevents anybody from feeling comfortable around him. He is also notorious for his lack of generosity – everyone in London knows he is parsimonious.

**No children asked him what it was o'clock** – children instinctively know that he is cold-hearted. It suggests that there is something almost innately built into Scrooge that is deeply unapproachable, sensed by children instinctively. There is a natural avoidance of Scrooge from them, as though he is the town monster. It is further mirrored in the way that Tim calls Scrooge the 'ogre' of the family – he is a terrifying monster that frightens children, again a pure caricature of a villainous monster.

**Enquired the way of such and such a place** – even the smallest requests cause Scrooge anger. He will not help others even when the thing they want is simple, and costless. People are not asking for money, just kindness and assistance and a little of Scrooge's time – but he will not even grant them this. It suggests that small kindnesses can make significant differences to our reputation.

**Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"**

**Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him** – Scrooge is so deeply evil that even animals instinctively know that he is terrible. It is interesting that Scrooge seems relatively unmoved by the idea that everyone and everything in society ignores him. He seems to prefer isolation and lack of community because it costs him less time, effort and money – but the end result of this is total isolation and loneliness.

**Would tug their owners into doorways** – people need protecting from Scrooge, again as though he is a monster. All of this is very hyperbolic – and this is designed to ensure that it is all the more of a miracle when he is changed and redeemed later on. It is also the case though that because everyone avoids Scrooge – even 'dogs' do so – he never has much reason to become a better person. Perhaps we are encouraged here not to give up on misers like Scrooge.

**No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master** – Scrooge radiates evil, and these words conjure up images almost of sorcery and witchcraft, implying a deep, innate sense of malevolence in Scrooge. There is an irony here, however. The blind men are literally physically unable to see the world, but they are able to see it better than Scrooge himself can. Scrooge chooses the metaphorical darkness for himself rather than finding the light of God, but those who live in the literal darkness of blindness are closer to God's light than the miser is.



# STAVE ONE MEET BOB

**Open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk** -

this suggests that he is suspicious of the working classes. He does not trust his clerk to do his work unless Scrooge stares at him – implying that almost instinctual mistrust of the poor that Scrooge has developed. It infantilises the poor and assumes they are almost criminal.

**Scrooge kept the coal box in his own room** –

this is symbolic of the way that the wealthiest in society hoard resources. They believe themselves to be better at using resources, or more intelligent in some way, implying that the poor are childish or unable to function properly as adults. It infantilises Bob, implying he would steal.

**Tried to warm himself at the candle** – implies that

Bob is given the absolute bare minimum to survive. He can survive from the warmth of a candle, suggesting the resourcefulness of the poor in keeping themselves alive with minimal resources. It also suggests that the poor do not ask for very much – just the minimum to keep themselves alive. It is very hyperbolic that Scrooge would be so miserly, but such parsimony would be recognisable to many of the Victorian poor.

**Dismal little cell** – Bob works in miserable conditions, a 'cell' having connotations of literal prison, suggesting that his work life is no different than incarceration for him. It is ironic that later Scrooge asks 'are there no prisons' – he seems to believe that the poor are inherently criminal and deserve some sort of punishment. He does not provide appropriate working conditions for his workers, reflecting typical working conditions for the poor at the time.

**The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters.**

**Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.**

**White comforter** – 'white' has connotations of purity and innocence. It suggests Bob is a wholesome, pure character who is nothing but morally good and innocent. He wears a long scarf (this is what a 'comforter' is) to help himself to stay warm. It contrasts with the 'black coal' that is associated with Scrooge here – implying the moral blackness of Scrooge in denying his worker the basic need of warmth

**His clerk** – we do not find out Bob's name until we see him in stave three with his family. When he is Scrooge's worker he is nameless, without a distinct identity. It implies that wealthy bosses view their workers as objects, not as humans, whose value is solely derived from how much money they can make them.,.

**Scrooge had a very small fire** – reflective of how miserly he is. We know 'darkness is cheap and Scrooge liked it', and it suggests he will not spend money even to keep himself comfortable. 'Fire' is also a metaphor for hope and love, implying that Scrooge has little hope in his life.

**The clerk's fire was so very much smaller** – implies that if Scrooge is miserly towards himself, he is even more avaricious when it comes to caring for others. There is the sense that Bob is entirely helpless and powerless here – he is freezing cold but he has so little control over his own life that he is unable to use appropriate resources to warm himself up. We feel deep sympathy for him here – the poor have no control.

# STAVE ONE FRED'S SPEECH

**Many things from which I might have derived good by which I have not profited** – Fred's

whole speech is the voice of Dickens coming through – he reminds us here that 'goodness' and 'money' are not the same thing. We do not need money to be good people, and our wealth is not a measure of our morals.

**Apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin** –

here we have a reminder that Christmas should have nothing to do with money or gift-giving. It is a reminder that actually Christmas is about Christianity and celebrating Christ. Fred is a moral, upstanding citizen and a model Christian, in order to show us as readers the right way to behave.

**A good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time** –

Christmas, for Fred and people like Fred, is nothing more than a time to be happy and with family. It is a reminder to Dickens' readers that these are the important things in life – not money or gift-giving.

**Open up their shut-up hearts freely** – this

contrasts clearly with 'solitary as an oyster' – Scrooge is one of those with a 'shut up heart' like an oyster. This is an encouragement to become more open-hearted and to let people in. Even those who aren't as parsimonious as Scrooge, but who lean towards isolation, need a reminder that friendship and community is more important than anything else.

**There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as**

**if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!" The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded.**

**Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.**

**People below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys** – this

is Dickens' ultimate message to us. Fred tells us that we are all the same in death – God's judgement does not take wealth into account – and heaven or hell awaits us regardless. Money is therefore not a worthwhile pursuit in life, as Marley reminds us later in the stave.

**Though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket I believe it has done me good** –

another reminder here that money does not buy happiness. We do not need to strive towards significant amounts of wealth, instead we need to put more of our emphasis towards things that will improve us morally and spiritually.

**The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded**

– if Bob represents the working classes, here we see that this message is approved by the poor. It reminds us that sometimes the poor need someone like Fred to speak on their behalf when they cannot speak for themselves. It encourages the middle classes to speak out.

# STAVE ONE CHARITY WORKERS

## ***I can't afford to make idle people merry –***

Scrooge considers the poor to be 'idle' or lazy. He believes clearly that the poor cause their own misery by not working hard enough. He also considers it wasteful, and suggests that it will make them 'merry', as opposed to helping to feed or clothe them. He facetiously downplays the important role of charity.

***It's not my business*** – in almost a direct mirroring of 'mankind was my business' later in the novella, Scrooge is of a mind that people should look after themselves and that he has no social responsibility to help his fellow men. He chooses his ignorance, and it allows him to feel less guilt for his miserly ways.

***Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened*** – the pathetic fallacy here is a dramatic device that indicates deepening misery and an absence of metaphorical light. It comes right after Scrooge is his utmost evil, suggesting the poor ought to die, and it almost implies that the more people like Scrooge are cold and callous, the foggier and more evil the world becomes.

***Must go there*** – the imperatives here imply that he feels a sense of power over the poor – he feels he must control their behaviours and feels entitled to tell them what to do and where to go.

***"Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there." "Many can't go there; and many would rather die." "If they would rather die," said Scrooge, "they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don't know that." "But you might know it," observed the gentleman. "It's not my business," Scrooge returned. "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"*** Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

***Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slyly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there***

## ***If they had rather die they had better do it –***

Scrooge is callous and cold with his words. This part is symptomatic of the ideas that Dickens so deeply wished to challenge – Scrooge views prison as enough, because he pays his taxes for them. He openly believes the poor deserve punishment, and even death, for the crime of being poor. He sounds the epitome of evil.

***Decrease the surplus population*** – implies that Scrooge considers the poor to be unnecessary additions to society. To have a 'surplus' is to have too much of something. It implies that he views them as burdens to the state. The mathematical nature of the word 'decrease' implies again that sense that these people are not people, but numbers to be counted – objects to be gotten rid of as needed. He does not consider them human.

***The ancient tower of a church...peeping slyly down at Scrooge*** – this is God watching over Scrooge, but in a way he does not seem to notice or to care about. We know Scrooge does not go to church, as a good Victorian gentleman should, and here we see God's judgement of him for this.

# STAVE ONE MARLEY'S GHOST

**Captive, bound and double-ironed** – Marley is imprisoned. There is an irony here, after Scrooge so callously condemned the poor to 'prisons and poor houses', that someone such as Marley should end up in a prison of purgatory. This lack of freedom in death is Marley's punishment for the lack of freedom he afforded to others in life.

**You were always a good man of business Jacob** – Scrooge still cannot see the errors in his judgement. He believes still that the most important thing a person can be in life is rich. He does not see that this is what has landed Marley in a purgatorial state of misery and pain. He seems genuinely to believe that being good to others is unimportant.

**The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business** – the 'comprehensive ocean' implies to us that human life is complex, and our responsibilities to others are limitless. We often, as a society, boil down our responsibilities to just our immediate family, friends, work etc. but actually Marley reminds us that we have an 'ocean' of business to contend with, and that we should open up our hearts to the possibility that we must care for all of mankind.

**Any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere...** Another reminder, again, that a Christian life is the most morally pure one. The word 'little' implies that it does not take large acts of philanthropy, rather small and constant acts of Christian kindness

**"Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed,"** cried the phantom, **"not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that**

**no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!"** **"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,"** faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

**"Business!"** cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. **"Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"** It held up its chain at arm's length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again. **"At this time of the rolling year,"** the spectre said, **"I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned**

**down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me**

**No space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused** – this is a stark warning from Marley that we only have one life and we must use it appropriately – to help one another, spread cheer and kindness, to love each other and to be good, moral, Christian people, or else we will regret our choices.

**Mankind was my business** – Marley must give his message in the simplest of terms to Scrooge, as he does not understand. This is a reminder that being a good businessman is not a good model to build your life on – and that other people – helping them, loving them etc. – is our life's work. Capitalist mindsets have, seemingly, destroyed our perception of reality, and Marley is here to remind us of that.

**Why did I walk through crowds of fellow beings with my eyes turned down** – Here, Marley criticises our ignorance. We are prone as a society to ignoring others and carrying on with our own business – but Marley reminds us that this is leading to a lack of community and care for others, and we should not behave this way.



# STAVE TWO FIRST GHOST

## **A strange figure –**

Dickens ensures to emphasise the supernatural nature of this spirit. However, it is not necessarily frightening. It is 'strange', but not scary. This helps us to see that the ghost is not there to terrify us, but to teach us. 'Figure' has stately connotations, almost of leadership and power.

## **Like a child yet not so like a child as like an old man –**

we know here that Scrooge needs to learn both how to be a child – in their innocence and purity, but also he needs the wisdom of the elderly to help him change. Without both, he cannot become a better man. It is interesting that he places such emphasis on childishness – it is a reminder to us to never lose our sense of child-like innocent wonder

## **Its hair was white as if with age –**

'white' has connotations of purity and innocence but again we are reminded that Scrooge lacks wisdom. He thinks he is worldly wise but actually does not possess all that he needs to become an intelligent man filled with generally accepted wisdom.

## **The arms were very long and muscular, the hands the same –**

the ghost is intimidating. Whilst it possesses the sweetness and innocence of childhood and old age, we also see that it is more than capable of physicality. Perhaps we are seeing here the idea that Scrooge cannot really win – he lacks everything that this spirit possesses.

## **It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium,**

**which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. 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, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful.**

**It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.**

## **It wore a tunic of the purest white –**

again, purity and innocence come through here with the 'purest white' – the ghost sounds angelic, like a messenger from God attempting to deliver the Christian teachings to Scrooge. 'Tunic' has associations with battle though, and it is implied that this ghost is almost like a soldier, here to fight the ideologies Scrooge espouses.

## **From the crown of its head there sprung a bright, clear, jet of light –**

the 'light' of the ghost is designed to symbolise the light of God, but also of clarity. It illuminates everything Scrooge tries to hide about himself – he prefers 'darkness' because it is easier to remain there than to confront his failures. The ghost is here to illuminate his past – force him to *feel* again and reconnect with everything he has chosen to repress.

## **It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand –**

holly is an evergreen plant, never changing, always constant – thus we see that time passes but the past always remains constant. We cannot change it. Holly is symbolic in Pagan culture too, as Pagans believed that the evergreen nature of the plant was encouraged by magic, and that it was a symbol of not just rebirth, but the ability to change and adapt with the seasons.

# STAVE TWO SCHOOL

**A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still** - this implies that even as a child Scrooge did not participate in celebration. Around him, as he entered the school with the ghost, he saw joyful, jovial celebration. Yet, here inside the school he is sat isolated and alone – mirroring his later relationship with Christmas and celebration.

**Walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken** – decay, neglect and abandonment are the connotations here and it is suggested that profit has come above education and safety when it comes to Scrooge's schoolhouse. The neglect also feels synonymous with the neglect Scrooge faces being left at school by his family.

**Too much getting up by candle-light and not too much to eat** – both of these things reflect frugality. It reminds us of the 'saucepan of gruel' Scrooge eats on Christmas Eve, and further shows that his upbringing has influenced him as an adult. Scrooge sees success as amassing large amounts of money, and yet his living conditions are still very close to that which he had as a child. His life has not been transformed by his work – it has had no impact at all. Thus, we can see the futility of Scrooge's pursuits. He does not benefit from his parsimony – instead he continues the cycle he has known since childhood.

**"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still." Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed. They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat. They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.**

**It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes** – this mirrors many of the buildings Scrooge will spend his adult life in; his 'melancholy tavern', his house which is 'dark' by choice and the fires unlit. He is surrounded by misery as a child and therefore sees no value in comfort as an adult.

**Poorly furnished, cold and vast** – the furniture is utilitarian and lacks comfort, the frugality mirroring Scrooge's approach to homes and buildings in his later life. He maintains the 'cold' in his office and home, and actively prefers the darkness. Here we see his upbringing influencing his later life.

**A lonely boy was reading by a feeble fire** – He chooses, instead of celebrating Christmas, to advance his mind by 'reading'. The fricatives in 'feeble fire' almost mirror the desolate coldness he feels. Fire is associated with hope too – and Scrooge had no hope as a child, let alone as an adult. It implies that the hope we have as a child is indicative of the sort of life we will lead. Scrooge experiences no warmth or generosity in childhood so does not value it in adult life.

# STAVE TWO SCROOGE'S SISTER

## ***Darting in, putting her arms about his neck –***

Fan actually mimics much of the behaviours of the Cratchit children in stave 3. She moves apace, with childlike wonder and joy. Scrooge is not incapable, therefore, of the same. She is guileless and innocent, and thus we see that even when raised in the same environment as Scrooge, Fan is able to be wholesome and pure. It implies perhaps that our upbringing is not an excuse for curmudgeonly ways.

## ***Clapping her tiny hands and bending down to laugh***

– just like Fred, she is cheerful and joyful. She loves life, and is unashamed of her joy. We feel even deeper sympathy in her passing because of how unrestrainedly joyful she is – and we see the loss that Scrooge has suffered in losing such a wonderful sister.

## ***Home's like heaven! –***

Again, that absence of 'heaven' before father became kinder suggests that a Christian God would not approve of the way Scrooge has been raised. A lack of purity is implied – suggesting that now that the home is a safe, welcoming place for children that it is closer to what God may have intended.

***I have come to bring you home!*** – Fan's words are often followed by exclamation marks. She is pure, unbridled, enthusiastic joy – she reminds us of Fred with his earnestness and love for others. This perhaps suggests that we mirror what we learn in childhood. It is interesting that Fan has come to bring her brother home though – it suggests a lack of adult involvement. It is not responsible to send a child to do this adult task. We do see a sense of both children having lost their childhoods here – Fan is almost the mother to Scrooge, despite being younger than him. She was *sent in a coach to bring him* again suggesting that she is wise beyond her years and things are expected of her that no child should be expected to do. She is mature and wise beyond her years.

***It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother." "I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!" "Home, little Fan?" returned the boy.***

***"Yes!" said the child, brimful of glee. "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man!" said the child, opening***

***her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world."***

***"You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the boy.***

## ***Father is so much kinder than he used to be***

– it is clear here that Scrooge's father has a history of being at best unpleasant and at worst abusive to his children. Many Victorian parents believed in not being too demonstrative with their children, and did often hold their children at arms length. This is in stark contrast to the way that Bob chooses to raise his children. Bob is symbolic of parents who have actively chosen to ignore the 'straight-laced' middle-class way of raising children, and instead treats his children with love and compassion and is able to express emotional sentiment towards them. Scrooge's father seems of the repressed sort – someone who lacks kindness and warmth. Thus we perhaps see Dickens criticising this idea – and warning us against being cruel to our children.

# STAVE TWO FEZZIWIG

**There was cake and there was negus...** Fezziwig is incredibly generous to his workers. The long list of foods named here shows his philanthropy and benevolence – implying that (in direct contrast to Scrooge) he believes that his workers are deserving of having money spent on them in celebration of Christmas. It shows us that wealth and generosity are not mutually exclusive.

**Fezziwig would have been a match for them** – just like Fan was, Fezziwig is full of unbridled joy and happiness. He loves life – and enjoys a dance. He considers himself equal to his employees – enjoying a dance with them and partying with them. This criticises the idea that just because you are wealthier, you cannot be equal to those 'below you'. He balances a successful business with being joyful.

**Shaking hands with every person individually** – again Fezziwig considers himself an equal to his workers. The word 'individually' is most telling here – it implies he sees his workers as human beings, unlike Scrooge who will not even use his clerk's name. It contrasts too with the idea of a 'surplus' population – it recognises that there is no 'surplus' population, only individual human beings with lives and feelings and complexities.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who would dance, and had no notion of walking. But if they had been twice as many—ah, four times—old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger. When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

**Plenty of beer** – this is interesting as there was a common belief at the time that the poor were drunk often, and that this contributed to their poverty. Here, Fezziwig provides the beer for them instead of judging them – he understands that the poor are deserving of a celebration that they find fun and entertaining.

**A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons** – just like Fred, Belle and the ghosts, Fezziwig is associated with 'light' and joy. Fezziwig is a source of light – light 'issues' from him. Fezziwig is a hope to others and someone who spreads joy and Christian light wherever he goes. 'Moons' are interesting as they light up darkness – implying that in a sea of businessmen who choose darkness, Fezziwig is a beacon of hope.

**Left to their beds which were under a counter in the back shop** – where Bob cannot even be provided with coal for the fire, Fezziwig provides his apprentices with a roof over their heads. Again, here we see that generosity and wealth are not mutually exclusive ideas. We can give to others without becoming poor ourselves.



# STAVE TWO BELLE

## ***Wear the signs of care***

***and avarice*** – physically Scrooge is starting to look miserly. As with stave one, we see that being cruel to others physically alters the face – greed profoundly alters the soul, and this alteration is physically evident in our faces.

## ***An eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye***

– adding to our motif of eyes here (red eyes, ferret eyes, sparkling eyes etc), we see that Scrooge lacks peace – he is 'restless'. Greed and avarice has caused him to be constantly moving, seeking, grasping for more and more. He sounds almost animalistic here – as though he is predatory, searching and seeking for the next thing to benefit him the most.

## ***Another idol has displaced me... a golden one***

– an 'idol' is something religious that we worship, and it is considered sinful to worship a false idol. Scrooge's idol is money or 'gold'. Not only does Scrooge not treat Belle with love and respect in his pursuit for money, but he also has forgotten that he ought to put his faith and energy into worshipping God. It is interesting that this is the life that Belle seeks for herself – she powerfully recognises the path that Scrooge is treading, and rejects that life even if it means financial hardship for her.

## ***In whose eyes there were tears***

***which sparkled in the light*** – Belle, like Fred, 'sparkles' in her eyes. Here, however, that sparkle is created by reflecting 'light'. Thus, we see that by letting the light in, we too can sparkle with the same warmth and joy. It is notable that she is in the process of eliminating the darkness – Scrooge – from her life in order to better let light into her life.

## ***Again, Scrooge saw himself. He was***

***older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall. He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past. "It matters little," she said, softly. "To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve."***  
***"What Idol has displaced you?" he rejoined. "A golden one."***  
***"This is the even-handed dealing of the world!" he said. "There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!" "You fear the world too much," she answered, gently. "All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?" "What then?" he retorted. "Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you."***

## ***The passion that had taken root and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall***

– there is a semantic field of nature here with 'tree' and 'root', suggesting that the greed that is within Scrooge is a natural part of him, something that has planted in his soul and perniciously spread through him like roots. Biblically, trees are associated with physical and spiritual nourishment, yet here Scrooge chooses to use this nourishment to improve his wealth, not his person. The tree is 'growing', but will eventually become so large it will cast a 'shadow', drawing on that dichotomy of light and dark. Greed is what causes that darkness. The negativity is slowly growing and encroaching on his life.

## ***Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then?***

– Scrooge believes that parsimony and wisdom are synonymous. He thinks that we have to hoard our wealth and pursue wealth unashamedly to be considered intelligent. He thinks of generosity and philanthropy is childish. It is condescending to speak to Belle this way – who clearly recognises that Scrooge is the one lacking wisdom.

# STAVE TWO THE END

## **Haunt me no longer! –**

Scrooge's words are followed by exclamation marks; he is feeling emotions that he was not capable of previously. His strength of feeling by the end shows us that his journey into his past has allowed him to open up a little and feel to the point where he is able to shout and scream.

## **Seized the extinguisher cap –**

Scrooge 'seizes' a 'ruler' earlier in the play when confronted with a carol singer, a wholesome and innocent child singing a celebratory song. Here he 'seizes' the extinguisher when confronted by the light of redemptive change. Both make him feel uncomfortable. When he feels uncomfortable, he grows angry. He has main unexplored and uncontained emotions but these just explode as anger. The ghost has not fully achieved its purpose yet – Scrooge responds much the same to his extreme feelings as he did at the beginning of the novella. Arguably, both moments in the novella attempt to force him to confront Christ also – with the Christmas song and the light both representing Christianity in their own way. Thus, we see Scrooge's anger at his inability to fully believe in God.

**The ghost, with no visible resistance on its own part –** the past does not fight us, it does not resist, it does nothing at all but exist, and yet we fight against our past constantly. There is an acknowledgement here that our fight is futile – we almost seem stupid for trying to fight against our pasts – and instead we must confront it.

**“Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!” In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head. The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light, which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.**

## **By a sudden action, pressed it down with all his force –**

Scrooge's behaviour is driven by emotion here. It is thoughtless and instinctive. There is a sense that he is losing his calculated and considered self, and being replaced by someone who is actually driven by his feelings. The violence here is interesting too – 'all his force' – he is defending himself to the point of aggression. He panics when confronted with the truth and lashes out in anger due to his fear. This is the first and only moment in the novella that we see Scrooge use his physicality – he does not fight anything else for the remainder of the novella. Interesting that his past is what evokes such a strong reaction from him, implying that confronting our past is often the most difficult – both emotionally and physically – for us to process.

## **Its light was burning high and bright –**

the light here signifies the truth for Scrooge. Scrooge's redemptive path is signalled by light and here he finds it uncomfortable to look at. It is difficult for him to process. We know he has 'ferret eyes' that are 'accustomed to the darkness' and therefore when he is confronted by the light he cannot process it. He does not understand yet his full capacity for change, nor the necessity for it.

## **He could not hide the light which streamed from under it –**

This is a lesson to all of us; no matter how hard we try to fight against what is right, the goodness will always overcome the evil. It is implied that Scrooge tries to hide from God here too – as in God's 'light' – but it is much too powerful and literally uncontainable.

# STAVE THREE SECOND GHOST

## **Look upon me! Scrooge reverently did so –**

Scrooge has not been reverent so far in his time with the spirits, but had grown more obedient since his experience with Marley, where he was far more belligerent. It perhaps shows us the commanding nature of the ghost, and the idea that the Present demands our immediate attention.

## **Its feet...were also bare –**

the ghost is designed to resemble Jesus himself here; the bare feet are symbolic of his servitude to the Lord. This ghost is laid bare, and is teaching Scrooge about the importance of not concealing oneself. Nothing hides from God. The ghost is an open book, the antithesis of Scrooge being 'secret and self-contained'.

## **Its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice –**

this ghost directly juxtaposes our description of Scrooge from earlier. Where Scrooge's eyes are 'red' and like a 'ferret', the ghost's 'sparkle' (like Fred's and Belle's do!), reflecting his internal goodness and moral purity. He has an 'open hand' where Scrooge's was 'squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching', and 'fight-fisted' too, suggesting this ghost is generous and giving where Scrooge only takes. Scrooge's voice was 'grating' and the ghost's is 'cheery' – he is the complete opposite to miserly Scrooge to teach Scrooge to change.

## **It was clothed in one simple green robe –**

the ghost is intended to be reminiscent of Father Christmas here. He embodies Christmas and is here to teach Scrooge of its joys. The 'simplicity' of the robe demonstrates the lack of need for extravagance – Christmas is not about spending money, nor should it be.

**"I am the Ghost of Christmas Present," said the Spirit. "Look upon me!" Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust**

## **An antique scabbard but no sword was in it –**

we see here that the ghost is a symbol of peace, suggesting that – by extension – 'Christmas' is a time of peace too. The word 'antique' reminds us that the idea of violence and use of weaponry ought to be outdated concepts. A more civilised and refined society chooses peace, finding solutions through words as opposed to mindless, senseless fighting. The sword symbolises the message of this ghost in that it is here to help Scrooge to see that he need not be harmful to others, and can choose peace and love.

## **Bordered with white fur –**

'white' has connotations of purity and innocence, suggesting that the ghost embodies these moral, Christian values. We also see an element of grandeur here – he seems regal and powerful in his attire.

## **No other covering than a holly wreath –**

mirroring Jesus' crown of thorns, the ghost shows us that the Lord's message lives on through us in our celebration of Christmas. By celebrating Christmas with joy and happiness, we further the message of Christianity. The holly also forms a link between this and the previous ghost – reminding us that the past and present are linked and that one cannot be extracted from the other. Our present is always influenced by our past.

## **The ancient sheath was eaten up with rust –**

the rust symbolises the fact that there has been no need to use the sword it once contained. The ghost has had no need for it – he does not carry a weapon even though he could if he so chose. The ghost consciously and purposefully chooses peace. Arguably there is also a biblical image here; the angels tell the shepherds of the birth of Christ and say he will bring 'peace and good will to all men', confirming for us the idea that this ghost almost mirrors Jesus himself.



# STAVE THREE CRATCHITS PT.1

## ***Up rose Mrs Cratchit, brave in ribbons***

– Mrs Cratchit is a powerfully stoic woman who refuses to allow her poverty to define her. She is fierce in her determination to be respectable and raise respectable children, and her 'ribbons' are symptomatic of this. She is well dressed in celebration of Christmas, as any middle class family would be.

**Twice-turned gown** – as with her ribbons, Mrs Cratchit refuses to appear slovenly. She industriously repairs her clothing so that she does not seem shabby, and her physical appearance therefore reflects her sheer determination to appear outwardly more well-off than she is. This does not feel social-climbing however, and more represents the fierce pride of the poor, whose dreams and aspirations do not differ to their middle-class counterparts. The poor do not wish to be poor.

## ***Belinda...also brave in ribbons***

– Belinda adopts the stoicism of her mother, who has passed her pride onto her children. Much criticism was made of the poor's ability to raise children, and here we see the opposite to be true – Belinda is raised in the image of her mother, who loves and cares for her, and helps her look presentable.

## ***His monstrous shirt collar***

– just as with Belinda and Mrs Cratchit, Peter is cared for and made presentable by his father. The son is made in the image of his father. This love, care and attention is at odds with the way that many wealthier Victorians believed working-class parents behaved. It makes us feel sympathy for Peter however, because his shirt does not fit, but he wears it with pride because he has little else to wear.

**Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda**

**Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the**

**day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in**

**luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.**

## ***Yearned to show his linen in the fashionable parks***

– perhaps one of the saddest lines in the novella – Peter Cratchit has nothing at all. The 'fashionable parks' he wishes to show off in would consider him laughable – he is not himself 'fashionable' because he cannot afford to be – but he *wants* to be. He is wearing an oversized shirt belonging to his father and he thinks it to be the most fashionable thing in the world because his father gave it to him. It shows us that gifts imbued with love, passed down with care, are more valuable than anything money can buy.

## ***Basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion***

– the word 'basking' has connotations of luxury, and it is telling that the Cratchit children think of things that are so cheap – 'sage and onion' as pure luxuries. They are excited for something that would seem so simple to many middle-class readers and again we feel genuinely sad that these children are deprived of such things on a regular basis because they are poor.

## ***These young Cratchits danced about the table***

– the excitement the children feel shows us how happy they are to be with their family. Unlike Scrooge who passes through life joyless and alone, the Cratchits teach us that money does not buy happiness.

**As good as gold and better**

– Bob considers his son to be more valuable than gold or riches. Tim is also very well behaved, despite what many middle and upper-class people believed was true of working-class children. Indeed, it is pertinent that they discuss his behaviour – as it shows an awareness of and monitoring of Tim's actions, suggesting that they are parents who do care deeply how their children behave.

**Escorted by brother and sister**

- Tim, in the whole of stave three, goes virtually nowhere alone. He is carried or escorted everywhere he goes by his generous and loving family. Every time Tim is mentioned, he has 'support' or help – suggesting of course that he has a loving family, but perhaps also that his life is defined by disability. He cannot help or sustain himself alone.

**With which they soon returned in high procession**

– a procession is associated with celebration or formal ceremonies, and it suggests that the goose is something so worth celebrating it is almost regal. They are not used to such luxuries, and when they get them they do not take them for granted. The poor are contented with such small things, and are not asking for much when they ask for help.

**He hoped the people saw him in church**

– unlike Scrooge, Tim is a model Christian even as a child. He hopes people see him so that they feel grateful for their own situation, and he therefore helps to spread the message of God through his very presence. We feel the deep injustice here of Tim's illness – he is a good, moral, innocent child, entirely undeserving of any misfortune, cared for by loving parents. It is all the more emotional for us as readers.

**“And how did little Tim behave?” asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart’s content. “As good as gold,” said Bob, “and better.**

**Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.”** Bob’s voice

**was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty. His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby—compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.**

**His active little crutch was heard upon the floor**

– Tim tries to participate, the same way other children do. His feebleness and lack of mobility make us feel even deeper sympathy for him. His 'littleness' is emphasised often, and we desperately want to care for such a meek child, forcing us to feel anger that the state do not provide help for struggling families with disabled children.

**To his stool before the fire**

– fire as a motif runs throughout the novella and represents hope, often associated with community and family. Tim is physically put beside the 'fire' by his family, who help him to get there. It suggests that family is what provides hope for Tim, and the love of those around him is what allows him to remain so cheerful and hopeful.

**Some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons**

– It is unclear what they make here, but it is implied that it is rather cobbled together and not particularly appetising, but the ceremonial way in which it is made by the head of the family ensures that it is infused with importance. Its undefined nature suggests that it is perhaps of his own creation, reminding us that the poor have family traditions and practices particular to them, and complex lives worth saving.

# STAVE THREE CRATCHITS PT.3

**The hearth was swept and the fire made up** – they actively ‘make up’ the fire – they keep their own hope and love alive between them, it is an active process that they all engage in. They do not just hope for the best – they are industrious and work hard to keep their joy alive.

**Two tumblers and a custard cup without a handle** – the ramshackle nature of their ‘display of glass’ is directly juxtaposed to the ‘golden goblets’ to suggest that the poor will often try to emulate the middle and upper classes in their behaviours. The Cratchits want a display of glass. Their aspirations are not different to the middle classes – but it does perhaps highlight how entirely unnecessary a display of glass is. It is almost designed to make the reader laugh internally – that a family of eight make do with so little when wealthier families insist that they do not have money to share in aid of the poor.

**Bob held his withered little hand in his** – Bob is a loving, kind and caring father, in direct opposition to Scrooge’s father of earlier. He is emotional, affectionate and unashamed of loving his children. Tim is ‘withered’ though, and as a reader we feel sympathy with Bob for his inability and powerlessness to help his loved ones.

**The Cratchit family drew round the hearth in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one** – Bob sees fullness where there is none, especially when surrounded by family. He does not need the full circle, because his family offer him a completeness and fullness that nothing else in life could. He is optimistic always, and his focus on family and community means that he derives this optimism not from money, but from the love, support and care of others.

**At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit’s elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle. These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed: “A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!” Which all the family re-echoed. “God bless us every one!” said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father’s side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him. “Spirit,” said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, “tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”**

**The family display of glass** – this is supposed to be ironic; middle-class families have ‘displays of glass’, in a wasteful, opulent display of abundance and wealth that is arguably sickening when children like Tim exist in poverty. Such families have so many glasses that they have some to use and some to display, whereas families like the Cratchits haven’t enough for one each. This becomes a metaphor for the wealth inequality that Dickens is fighting against.

**As well as golden goblets would have done** – this is a considerable criticism of the upper classes specifically. There is no need for ‘golden goblets’ when any sort of receptacle does the same job. It reminds us that sometimes the things purchased by the wealthy are not just unnecessary, they are actively wasteful. This again is supposed to be ironic – they do not need golden goblets to feel happy and respectable on Christmas Day.

**Tell me if Tiny Tim will live** – this is a stark change from ‘decrease the surplus population’. Scrooge is finally learning what the ‘surplus’ is he talks of, and beginning to understand that the poor have lives and souls and hearts and are not actually just numbers to increase or decrease at his will

**Nothing of high mark in this** – even as the episode with the Cratchits draws to a close, Dickens draws our attention to their poverty. It is really their defining feature in the eyes of the reader – though it does not seem to be so to them. It reminds us that even when the poor seem happy and contented, they are still likely to be defined by their lack of resources.

**Peter might have known and very likely did the inside of a pawnbrokers** – Peter, a child, loses his childhood to poverty here. He must act like an adult, giving away his possessions for the good of his family. Where many believed that the poor could not raise children appropriately, here we see a child willing to sacrifice his own happiness to keep his family alive. It reminds us that the poor do not have the privilege of long childhoods, and that Scrooge's childhood – though miserable – was nowhere near as difficult as Peter's, and Peter is still happy and content.

**Happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch** – Christmas brings them joy. This is a criticism of Scrooge's inability to celebrate Christmas and recognise it for what it is – a time where families should come together to spread cheer and joy and happiness.

**Their shoes were far from being waterproof** – they lack the absolute bare necessities. Waterproof shoes protect us from harm and disease, and in Victorian streets often filled with human waste and other vile substances, we see just how little dignity this family are afforded, even on Bob's full time wage. It shows us that even when the poor do work hard – like Bob – they are not rewarded or able to care for their families.

**There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.**

**Scrooge had his eye upon them** – Scrooge is finally interested in the life of somebody else. Until now, he has shown no regard whatsoever for anybody we have seen him meet – aside from Fan when he was a child. As an adult, Scrooge has isolated himself, and told himself that the poor do not matter, that they are 'surplus', and should be 'decreased'. Here, finally, Scrooge has been forced to care about the life of the poor via the means of a poor, disabled child. Whilst it should not take this level of extremity to force him to care, it does suggest that everybody is capable of redemption with the right intervention.

**Their clothes were scanty** – again, a complete lack of dignity is afforded to the poor, even those who work. Bob is simply not fairly compensated for his work. He seems to do more work than Scrooge himself does, and yet cannot provide the minimum needed for his family because of his unfair wages.

**Happy, grateful, pleased with one another and contented with the time** – the Cratchits are arguably really romanticised. The 'happy poor' was a concept often used to make the middle classes feel better about their lack of contribution. A family like this would not have been happy all the time – which is why it is important that we later see them so miserable at the death of Tim. But, we do also learn a valuable lesson here – that money does not buy happiness and that when we put all of our time and energy into amassing as much wealth as possible, we actually do not get any happier, as is clear from the miserable life Scrooge lives.



# STAVE THREE FRED'S PARTY

## **He's a comical old fellow**

– they just do not take Scrooge seriously. He aspires to be a serious businessman full of intellect and severity, but actually people just find him a bit funny. It shows us that wealth does not buy respect – love, generosity and kindness do, but being a curmudgeonly miser will not make people respect us.

## **I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried**

– Fred is presented as purely benevolent here. He would have every right to be angry with him. This teaches us that sometimes it is our responsibility to forgive. Fred is paramount in Scrooge's redemption, and without Fred's forgiveness he would not have been allowed the opportunity to redeem. It is a reminder to forgive the sins of others.

## **Here he takes it into his head to dislike us and he won't come and dine with us**

– interestingly, many readers argue that Scrooge does not dislike Fred, or anyone for that matter. He just does not see the value in relationships. It is interesting then that Fred thinks he is disliked – it reminds us that even if our intentions are not to cause misery to others, they can interpret this as such.

## **His offences carry their own punishment**

– this is a reminder that we do not need to punish others personally for their sins and misdeeds. It could reference the idea of natural consequences – Scrooge is miserly so he has no joy and happiness in his life, and this is the consequence of his actions. It could also reference the punishment in hell that Scrooge will receive for his lack of Christian morality.

**"He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "that's the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him."**

**"I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece. "At least you always tell me so." "What of that, my dear!" said Scrooge's nephew. "His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going to benefit US with it."**

**"I have no patience with him," observed Scrooge's niece. Scrooge's niece's sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion. "Oh, I have!" said Scrooge's nephew. "I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner."**

**"Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner," interrupted Scrooge's niece. Everybody else said the same**

## **His wealth is of no use to him**

– This is perhaps the crux of the matter for the reader. Scrooge has not improved his life – he does not live comfortably or happily, he lives in a miserable, dark house, all alone, and does not spend his money. Thus we see that being a miser has not helped him at all – and that being greedy is of no benefit to us ultimately.

## **Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always.**

– again a reminder that being miserly and curmudgeonly has the greatest effect on oneself, not just the people around us. All of this is a diatribe directed straight at those like Scrooge who need to reflect on who their behaviour truly impacts and causes suffering to.

## **I think he loses a very good dinner**

– Fred's family love him dearly. He receives nothing but compliments and love in this scene, and his loving wife and doting family directly juxtapose Scrooge's lack of this. Fred receives what he gives out – the love he gives doubles and redoubles on its return back to him. It reminds us that being kind and generous to others will make them kind and generous to us.



**Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish** – the children are stripped of humanity, deconstructed to become unrecognisable, animalistic creatures. 'Wolfish' has connotations of survival and scavenging, suggesting that these children are forced to live at the same standard as wild animals. 'Yellow' of course suggests illness and disease, as if they lack sunlight and nutrition. They are a construct designed to show us in plain sight the impact misers are having on the lives of ordinary, innocent beings. They are almost decaying, they are haggard, emaciated, gaunt. This is hard to accept after Dickens has spent so long describing how much food there is in Victorian England in this stave – it reminds us that resources are not evenly distributed.

**Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked** – they have been purged of their goodness, entirely stripped of any capacity for being moral and good. Children should be symbolic of goodness, hope, vitality, liveliness – but they are instead corrupted by evil here instead. They have an almost demonic quality. They have never felt love and care, and therefore cannot give it in return. It shows us that how we treat our children is a direct reflection of what they will become in later life – and here they are monstrous and alien.

**Prostrate too in their humility** – they kneel, they are respectful to the ghost – who represents the Christian tradition of Christmas – suggesting that even these children, abused and left for dead by society, are able to understand and appreciate the tradition and necessity of celebrating Christmas. Though they are feral in appearance, they are capable of being respectful. 'Prostrate' can also translate to 'knocked flat' though, suggesting that society has taken all the life from them.

**They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread. Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.**

**Monsters half so horrible and dread** – again, they are subhuman, animalistic, evil, demonic. It is reflective of the fact that our society breeds its own monsters at times, and that if we were to better care for our children, we would ensure that such 'monsters' were not able to become quite so monstrous.

**A stale and shrivelled hand... had pinched and twisted them** – this reminds us of 'squeezing, wrenching, grasping', the hands used to inflict harm and to take away from others. These are the people that Scrooge takes from – innocent, vulnerable children. The ugliness of their faces is a metaphor for the ugliness of their treatment.

**Glared out menacing.** – they are terrifying monsters. They represent the idea that one day these children will become adults, who have the power to commit harm. They are societally a menace, and it is implied that they are almost criminal. It reminds us that often society raises children with no option but to turn to lives of crime – but that this is arguably very preventable.

**He tried to say they were fine children** – the middle-class way is to pretend that everything is okay; it suggests that often issues will be ignored for the sake of politeness or avoiding confrontation. Victorian politeness was actively preventing people from having these conversations.

# STAVE FOUR THE FINAL GHOST

**Slowly, gravely, silently approached** – this spirit is the stark opposite of the last. He embodies death; the way he moves is haunting and abjectly terrifying. He is nightmarish, and it is important that Ignorance and Want gave way to this ghost, implying the death that will follow if such children are not helped as they should be by society.

**Shrouded in a deep, black garment** – this spirit physically resembles the grim reaper, an image that would have been recognisable to Victorian English readers. The fact that this is symbolic of Scrooge's future foreshadows what we, as readers, can already guess at – that Scrooge will meet an untimely demise if he does not change his ways.

**Tall and stately when it came beside him** – despite its silence, this ghost is physically demanding, and an intimidating presence. The grim nature of the spirit shows that Scrooge's future holds no comfort, only misery and darkness. This spirit has no notion of Christmas about it – the others held holly and such – suggesting that Christmas is the necessity to living a happy, comfortable life that does not result in miserable death. This makes sure that we follow the command to celebrate Christmas.

**Scrooge bent down upon his knee** – Scrooge is reverent and respectful now. This is a far cry from 'more of gravy than of grave about you' from his first meeting with Marley. He does not just believe in the ghosts now, he is deeply afraid of them, and is respectful of the lessons they provide him. He has become deeply subordinate, willing to bend to the wills of the spirits where before he was 'caustic and cold as ever'.

**THE Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery. It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded. He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved. "I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" said Scrooge. The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.**

**The spirit answered not** – the ghost never speaks. The silence is fundamental to Scrooge finally coming to the realisation on his own that he must change. There are no more words that will be of use to him, only seeing the consequences of his actions can change his ways. Silence here carries enormous power.

**Scatter gloom and mystery** – Scrooge's future holds only this. There is no joy or happiness in the future for Scrooge if he does not change his ways. It is reminiscent of the gloom Scrooge spread to others at the beginning of the novella, and now Scrooge is experiencing that which he inflicted on others himself.

**Concealed its head, its face, its form** – the mysterious, unclear nature of the spirit's physical appearance is interesting – it shows us that Scrooge can shape and mould his future into whatever he wishes it to be. Nobody's future is set in stone, and our actions can change what happens to us. All we do know of the ghost is that it is frightening – but who is not frightened of their own future? Scrooge simply needed to be shown that he has a future, and that his actions in the present are paving the way for miserable consequences.

# STAVE FOUR OLD JOE'S SHOP

**Iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal** – there seems to be no sense of order; there is only chaos. The shop hosts all of the unwanted and discarded things in society – and it is no coincidence that it also helps many of the people who are discarded and unwanted by society too. It is designed to disgust us.

**Rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights** – this feels heavily reminiscent of Marley's chains, that were made of 'keys, cashboxes...' etc. Drawing parallel between these two moments in the novella can remind us that our worldly possessions are often discarded in our death, and will become meaningless when we are gone. The fact that the keys in the shop are 'rusty' again just implies that they have been discarded. This shop sells things nobody wants.

**Grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age** – Old Joe is much too old to work, and must continue to do so because he has no other option. He is a 'rascal', suggesting he is almost cheeky, slightly adjacent to the criminal underworld, but not necessarily nefarious or evil – just a working class man trying to get by.

**Screened himself from the cold air without by a frousy curtain** – he is an old man – very old by the standards of Victorian England – but he is left to freeze with nothing more than tattered curtains to keep him warm. Like Bob, he is physically cold, but also like Bob he does not have any metaphorical 'fire' either – that lack of hope, warmth and joy that the wealthy must bestow upon the poor if they are to have it at all.

**Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frousy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.**

**Smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement** – he seems almost proud of himself and the empire he has managed to build himself. Retirement seems an almost ironic word though – the poor are not afforded a retirement. It feels similar to the way that Peter and Martha are not allowed a childhood. The poor must work at every stage of their life – they have short childhoods and non-existent retirements. Both are luxuries afforded only to those who can afford them.

Joe's shop is a metaphor for the way the poor are forced to live. They must give bones and offal to pawnbrokers in return for money – they are not allowed any dignity, they must scrape and scavenge like animals. But, it is also the case that the poor help the poor. In this scene, Joe gives money for things that are literally not re-sellable, but does so to help the poor survive. There is a backwards sort of benevolence in this, but one which we almost must admire.

# STAVE FOUR SCROOGE'S DEATHBED

***He lay in a dark, empty house –***

Scrooge's resting place is dank, unkempt and miserable. Just like in life, Scrooge has not spent any money on himself, and therefore has died a miser's death. Nobody cared enough to come and visit him in death. It mirrors 'darkness is cheap and Scrooge liked it' – Scrooge does not see the value in spending on himself, but the reader is left wondering what the purpose of his money truly was, if not to share with others or spend on himself. He has died in adject misery and isolation.

***A cat was tearing at the door and there was a sound of gnawing rats –***

the sinister truth here is that his body has been left exposed to the elements, and the animals are there to disturb his dead body. Nobody is there to protect him in death. He is no better than vermin here.

***Not a man, woman or a child to say that he was kind to me in this or that –***

just as in stave one, nothing has changed and he is still a lonely, closed off, 'secret and self-contained' miser. Nobody remembers him fondly, nobody loved him, nobody cares that he has died. Being human is not about spending and saving money – it seems so arbitrary now that Scrooge has died. It reminds us that we cannot take our money with us, and that wealth is no reflection of a person, but the number of people who loved them is.

***Beneath the hearth-stone –***

a hearth holds a fire, and Scrooge's is empty. Unlike the Cratchits, Fred, even the miners and sailors, all have a fire. Scrooge is the lowest of all – and he has no fire by choice. All of the consequences that he suffers in his death are because of active choices he has made. He does not suffer because of forces beyond his control, but because of his own actions.

**He lay, in the dark empty house,  
with not a man, a woman, or a  
child, to say that he was kind to  
me in this or that, and for the  
memory of one kind word I will  
be kind to him. A cat was tearing  
at the door, and there was a  
sound of gnawing rats beneath  
the hearth-stone. What they  
wanted in the room of death, and  
why they were so restless and  
disturbed, Scrooge did not dare  
to think.**



# STAVE FOUR TIM'S DEATH

**Lighted cheerfully and hung with Christmas** – the

absolute juxtaposition of Scrooge's miserable, dark death, Tim's deathbed is 'lighted' and festive. He has people who care for him and grieve for him. It shows us that the poor are often more respectable, more loved, more Christian, than the middle-classes. Wealth is no indication of moral superiority.

**Chair set close beside the child and there were signs of some one having been there** – People visit

Tim in death – again, the antithesis of Scrooge. He is not alone. He is loved and cared for by that which Scrooge so desperately lacks – his family. Scrooge's lack of family is the cause of his misery, and the love that the Cratchits give to Tim is a result of Tim's kindness, purity, good will, Christian morals and loving spirit – all things Scrooge does not value.

**They drew about the fire** –

Nobody is there to draw around Scrooge's 'hearth', but the Cratchits all come together in their sadness. When they feel misery, they help each other to feel better. This community is what Scrooge lacks. The death of his sister is alluded to – and it is suggested that he had nobody to 'draw around a fire' with, nobody to give him hope. But the Cratchits draw hope and love from each other.

**I am heartily sorry for it Mr**

**Cratchit** – Fred is kinder than Scrooge in every possible capacity. He respects the poor, and treats them as human beings, and this is so highly valued by Bob because he does not experience this normally. It should not be abnormal to be respectful to our fellow human beings, but Bob finds it almost remarkable.

**He left the room, and went upstairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy. They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still.**

**Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little— "just a little down you know," said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. "On which," said Bob, "for he is the pleasantest spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. 'I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,' he said, 'and heartily sorry for your good wife.'**

**He kissed the little face** –

Bob is unafraid of being affectionate towards his children. He needs to know that they feel loved, even in death. Bob might be submissive at times and even weak, but he is a steadfastly good father and a wholly decent man, who grieves his son and loves him with all he has to give. 'Little face' only serves to make the reader feel more deep sympathies for Tim, and want the world to change to help to save the Tims of the world.

# STAVE FOUR REDEMPTION

**The kind hand** – whilst this has been a terrifying ghost, one reminiscent of death and misery – it has been 'kind' too. It reminds us that we are supposed to be frightened, that Scrooge needed to be scared to change his ways, but ultimately he needed this experience to be redeemed. The message has always only been a kind one.

**Tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone** – Scrooge is resolute in his desire to change. He is experiencing here his true moment of reckoning and he vows to entirely redeem himself. The thing that has so truly frightened him is the idea of being forgotten by all who knew him, and this has been the driving force behind his redemption. It is unclear as to whether he has changed because he wants to, or because he is afraid - but it is almost implied that this doesn't matter. He has changed and this is what matters.

**It sought to free itself but he was strong** – this mirrors his fight with the first ghost, where this ghost actually does free itself, and cannot be contained. The future though, Scrooge is stronger than. It implies the changeability of the future – the idea that we have agency and the capacity to change our destiny. Scrooge 'was strong', implying that internal strength that Scrooge now has to dictate a better life for himself.

**The kind hand trembled. "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 strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!" In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him. Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.**

**It shrunk, collapsed and dwindled down into a bedpost** – Scrooge moves from the dream-like world of the supernatural to something more concrete and real. He returns back to his physical state, and re-crosses the barrier into the real world. This is now his opportunity to take over and continue his redemption into the real world and it becomes his own responsibility.

**Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed** – he is finally submitting himself. He holds up his hands in a submissive display of surrender, and the thing he surrenders to is God. He finally 'prays' to God to save him, and gives into Christianity at last. This is his final action in the spirit realm, and once he has prayed to God he is released back into the real world. Once turned to God, Scrooge becomes an entirely better man, and is completely redeemed. It suggests that Christianity and God will be the ultimate redeemer for all and that once we turn to God, we will be saved.

# STAVE FIVE

## SCROOGE AWAKENS

***His hands were busy with his garments all this time*** – the excitement Scrooge feels comes out as nervous excitement and it is genuinely endearing. Beneath this there seems to be a panic too – an urgency to change his life and redeem himself. He feels his clothing because they are a reminder that he is real and that he has survived – his fear and excitement are mingled.

***I don't know what to do!*** – Scrooge wakes up almost entirely new, so different to his former self that he has forgotten how to exist. He is an entirely new person and has been born again – it feels as though his heart has now opened and he has returned to a position of almost childhood naivete. He realises his life was ill-spent, and has returned to his child-like state so that he is able to start again.

***I am as light as a feather*** – Scrooge has lost his metaphorical heaviness – the heaviness from the 'chains he forg'd' in his life so far. 'Feather' has connotations of birds, therefore freedom, and it implies that Scrooge is now free and able to navigate life through this new lightness and joy. He seems almost like an angel – he has been welcomed by Christ into Christianity now and is a representative of God's message to mankind – to live freely, with love and hope in our heart. This is in direct juxtaposition with the Scrooge who was 'hard and sharp', 'an oyster', at the 'grindstone' – it is to show his change.

***Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!*** – the unbridled joy that Scrooge feels and displays here is to show us that being a miser makes us miserable, and being generous and kind makes us happy. He is child-like and innocent, naïve and very endearing. Throughout the novella we have seen Fred and Bob be child-like and joyful, unrestrained in their joy and happiness, and Scrooge is finally letting his joy loose. He is able to enjoy himself without shame.

**His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance. "I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world. Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"**

# STAVE FIVE

## THE WEATHER

**No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring cold** – the 'fog' has lifted metaphorically too, now that Scrooge is living his life as a loving, Christian man. Where the cold before was 'bleak and biting', now it is 'stirring', 'piping', 'jovial' cold instead. This suggests that a shift in our perception is what is needed – the 'cold' is there both times, but how he feels about the cold is what makes the difference. His new perspective on life has allowed him to see the world in a different light entirely.

**Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells** – Scrooge hears and sees things through the lens of religion now. He sees the sky as 'heavenly'; hears the church bells – now that he has found God, his life is immeasurably more beautiful. Redeeming himself has allowed him to see the world through a brand new, positive lens.

**What's today my fine fellow?** – The fact that Scrooge shows such respect and politeness to this child is very different to the way he spoke to children earlier in the novella. He threw a 'ruler' at a young carol singer earlier, yet now he considers them equal – a 'fine fellow'. He has learned to see people – all people – as 'fellow passengers to the grave', as Fred initially suggested he should.

Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his head.  
 No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious! Glorious! "What's to-day!" cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loitered in to look about him.  
 "EH?" returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.  
 "What's to-day, my fine fellow?" said Scrooge.



# STAVE FIVE TRANSFORMATION

**He went to church** – very simply, this is what seems to have redeemed him the most. Turning to God has allowed him to live his life as a moral Christian man, respected in Victorian society. The simple sentence reminds us of the simplicity of the solution here – it is simple to follow the teachings of the Bible, and this is the key to our redemption.

**Walked about the streets** – he was 'secret and self-contained', he was 'solitary as an oyster', but now he is out in the world, engaging with the community, observing the people around him. His experiences with the ghost has given him the desire to go outside and see the world, and reminded him that a life of secrecy and self-containment is not a worthwhile one.

**Patted children on the head** – before, 'no child asked him what it was o'clock', and now he approaches them and makes them feel more comfortable. He becomes a father to all children – despite having no children of his own, he becomes a 'father' in his own way. This teaches us that we have a responsibility to mankind to be paternal/maternal to society's children to help to raise children who are not like Ignorance and Want.

**Questioned beggars** – previously 'no beggars implored him to bestow a trifle' and now he actively questions them. The focus has shifted too – he does not wait for them to be brave enough to 'implore' him, he takes the responsibility on his own. This teaches us that it is sometimes the wealthy's responsibility to bridge the gap between rich and poor – and not the responsibility of the poor to beg for help.

**He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house. He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it**

**Looked down into the kitchens of houses** – the kitchens of houses would be where the working classes would have been in larger, wealthier houses – cooking and cleaning etc. He is happy to 'look down' at them and feels deep interest in the lives of workers. Finally, Scrooge is able to empathise with the poor and takes an interest in their lives – where before they were 'surplus population', now they are something that genuinely interests him.

**He had never dreamed that any walk – that anything – could yield him pleasure** – he did not know previously that he would find happiness in community. This is interesting because it seems he genuinely did not know he could have lived a happier life. The power of Scrooge's character here is that he teaches misers that there is a better life for them – that they do actually live miserable lives and that happiness is well within their reach.

**He passed the door a dozen times before he had the courage to go up and knock** – Scrooge is frightened. He worries about being rejected for his past misdemeanours and is too scared to ask for forgiveness. This teaches us that – if we have misers in our lives that need forgiveness – we must forgive them freely and abundantly. It suggests that the redemption of society's misers is partly in our capacity to forgive them for their sins. We must remember that our forgiveness is what redeems them ultimately.