

Chapter 12

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come

The third ghost came towards Scrooge slowly and quietly. It wore a long black robe which hid its body and its face. The ghost was pointing at Scrooge. It did not speak to help

Scrooge had been a little afraid of the first two ghosts. But the Ghost of Christmas Past and the Ghost of Christmas Present had been friendly. They had spoken to him. But now Scrooge was very frightened. He fell onto his knees on the ground in front of the ghost.

'Are you the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?' Scrooge asked.

The terrible ghost did not answer. Now its hand was pointing past Scrooge. The ghost was showing Scrooge where they were going to go. 'Ghost of the future, I am afraid of you,' said Scrooge. 'I want to be a better man. I will come with you. Thank you for coming to help me. But please talk to me.'

The ghost's hand continued to point past Scrooge. The ghost did not speak.

Very frightened, Scrooge stood up. He took hold of the ghost's black robe. Immediately, they were in another part of London.

There were men everywhere. They were walking around very quickly. They were talking and looking at their watches. They were carrying account books like Scrooge's account books.

Scrooge knew where he was. He was in the Exchange.

This was the place where businessmen came to talk. They came here to buy and sell things. This was the place where Scrooge came to do his business every day.

The ghost stopped next to a group of men. Scrooge recognised them. The ghost pointed at them. It was telling Scrooge to listen to their conversation.;

Scrooge knew the men could not see him. So he stood near them and listened to them.

'When did he die?' asked one of the men.

'Last night,' replied another man.

'Who will go to his funeral?' asked a third man.

'I don't know.-Will anybody go to his funeral?' replied the second man.

'He didn't have any friends.'

Scrooge looked at the ghost. 'Who are they talking about?' he asked.

The ghost did not reply. It pointed at two more men.

Scrooge knew these men too. They were very important businessmen.

'I've heard that he's dead,' said one of them.

'Yes, he is,' replied the other. 'It's cold today; isn't it?'

Scrooge was surprised. Someone had died* Nobody

cared about the person who had died. Who were these people talking about? Why was the ghost telling him to listen to their conversations?

Then the ghost moved on. Soon they were in another part of London. This was a dirty, old part of the city where poor people lived; The ghost took Scrooge into a dirty little shop. Inside the shop there were old cooking pots, broken furniture and piles of dirty, torn clothes. An old man with grey hair sat in a corner smoking a pipe.

A woman came into the shop carrying a large bundle of cloth. An older woman came in carrying a smaller bundle of cloth. Then a man wearing a black suit came in. They all looked at each other in surprise.

Old Joe, the owner of the shop, locked the door. He took his visitors into a room behind the shop.

The women put down their bundles. 'It isn't wrong to take a few things from a dead man,' the older woman said.

'That's true. He's dead now. He doesn't need them,' said the other woman. 'We must look after ourselves.'



many things. He took

a watch and a few silver buttons out of his pocket.
The older woman had a few clothes and some bed sheets in her bundle.
Old Joe did not pay them very much

But the woman with the large bundle had stolen the curtains from around
a dead man's bed. She had also stolen the wool blankets from his bed.
And she; had stolen the clothes from the body of the; dead man.
'He had no friends, the woman said. 'No relatives came
to the house when he died. So we took the things we
wanted.

Scrooge listened in honor to their conversation. 'I understand why you
have brought me here,' he said to the ghost. 'I must learn to care about
people. People will steal from me when I die if I do not learn to care,'
The shop disappeared. Scrooge was now in a dark, cold room. There was
a bed without curtains around it. On the bed Was something covered by a
thin sheet. Scrooge was frightened. He knew there was a body under the
sheet. This was the body of the man who had no friends.

The ghost pointed at the body under the sheet. 'No, I
can't,' said Scrooge. 'I can't lift up the sheet. I can't look
at him. I understand why you are showing me this man.
Please let us leave this place now!'

The ghost did not move. 'Please,' said Scrooge, 'show
me somebody who cares about this man's death. Please!'

The ghost lifted its arms high in the air. The long black
robe hung down to the ground in front of Scrooge. When
the ghost lowered its arms again, Scrooge saw a room
behind, it,

There was a young woman in the room with her two children. She was
worried and she was walking round and



'No, I can't,' said Scrooge. I can't lift up the sheet.'

round the room.

The door opened and the woman's husband came in,

'Is there any news?' asked the woman quickly. 'Is there good news or bad news?'

'There is good news for us,' I replied the young man. 'I went to the old man's house. I was going to tell him that we can't pay him. I went to say that we'll pay him next week. But he's dead, Caroline. The old man is dead.'

'It's wrong to be happy because someone is dead,' said the woman.

'But I am happy.'

'Who must we pay now?' she went on.

'I don't know,' replied her husband. 'But someone else will be kinder to us than that old man. I'm happy too.'

Scrooge was horrified. This man and woman cared. But they were happy because the man had died!

'Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come,' he said, 'please take me somewhere else. Show me someone else who has died; But show me people who are sad about the death.'