

Chapter 14

A Changed Man

Scrooge closed his eyes, then opened them again. Yes, he was in his own bedroom. And he was alive!

'God bless you, Jacob Marley,' he said, 'Thank you for coming to help me. Thank you for sending the three ghosts.'

Scrooge was happy. He was very, very happy. He ran round his room. He got dressed very quickly.

'I'm very happy!' he cried. 'I'm happy! Happy! Happy! Merry Christmas to everybody! Happy Christmas to everybody in the world!'

Scrooge ran into the other room. He looked at the door where Marley's ghost had come in. He looked at the window where the ghost had gone out. He looked at the places where the other ghosts had been.

Scrooge knew that he had met the ghosts. He knew that all those things had happened. And Scrooge laughed. Scrooge: had not laughed for many years and now he laughed very loudly.

'What day is it?' he said suddenly. 'How long have I Been away?'

Then church bells started to ring. All the church bells in London started to ring. Scrooge ran to the window and opened it.

'What day is it?' he shouted down to a boy in the street.

The boy looked very surprised. Then he replied. 'It's Christmas Day, of course!'

'Christmas Day!' shouted Scrooge. 'I haven't missed it. All those things happened in one night.'

'Boy!' he shouted. 'Do you know the shop at the end of the street? Do you know the shop with a huge turkey hanging in its window?'

'Do you mean the turkey that's as big as me?' asked the boy.

'Yes, yes,' said Scrooge. 'I want you to go and buy it for me. Tell the man in the shop to bring the turkey here.'

Here's some money for you!' And Scrooge threw some coins down.

Scrooge went downstairs. He waited for the man: to bring the turkey. He looked at the door, knocker. He remembered seeing Marley's face there, 'I shall always love this door knocker,' he said to himself.

The man arrived with the huge turkey. 'I want you to take the turkey to this address,' Scrooge said to him. And he told the man where Bob Cratchit lived. Then Scrooge went out for a walk. He met the gentleman who had asked him for money.

'I'm very sorry I did not help you yesterday,' said Scrooge. Then he whispered in the man's ear. The man looked very surprised. 'That's a lot of money.'

Do you want to give that much money?' he asked.

'Oh, yes! Yes!' replied Scrooge; 'I want to give you a lot of money!'

Scrooge walked on. He talked to the children he met in the streets. He talked to the poor people. At last, he arrived at a house and knocked on the door. His nephew opened it.

'Hello, Fred,' said Scrooge. 'Can I come in?'

Fred smiled and shook his uncle's hand. 'You're very welcome, Uncle,' he replied.

Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present had watched Fred's wonderful party. Now Scrooge had come to the party. He ate good food and drank good wine. He laughed and played games with Fred, and Fred's pretty wife, and all their happy friends.

Next morning Scrooge arrived early at his office. He was hoping that Bob Cratchit would be late for work. And Bob was late. He did not arrive at nine o'clock. He did not arrive at quarter past nine. It was eighteen and a half minutes past nine when Bob arrived.

'You are very late!' Scrooge said to Bob. 'Come into my room.'

Bob was very worried. Was he going to lose his job? 'Christmas Day is only once a year,' he said.

'Yes, that's right,' said Scrooge. 'There's only one Christmas Day in a year.' Scrooge put his hand on Bob's shoulder. 'So I am going to pay you more. I'm going to raise your wages!'

Bob was very surprised. Was Scrooge mad?

Then Scrooge said, 'Merry Christmas, Bob!' The old man spoke kindly.

So Bob knew that Scrooge was not mad.

'Thank you, sir,' Bob said;



'I am going to pay you more. I'm going to raise your wages!' said Scrooge.

'Merry Christmas, Bob,' Scrooge repeated. 'Now, we must talk about your family. Your boy, Peter, will need a job soon. And we must look after Tiny Tim, mustn't we? This afternoon we'll talk about how I can help.

'But first,' Scrooge went on, 'here's some money. Please go out and buy some more coal!'

Scrooge did help Bob and his family. Tiny Tim did not die. Scrooge cared for the little boy and loved him always. ———

Scrooge made many friends. He laughed and he smiled. He talked to everybody. He spent his money and helped the poor people. Some people laughed at the old man because he had changed so much. But Scrooge did not care.

Scrooge did not ever meet another ghost. But he enjoyed Christmas more than anyone else in the world!