

Chapter 5

The Ghost of Christmas Past

When Scrooge woke up, it was very dark. He heard the sound of a bell. There was a clock in the church near Scrooge's house. The bell in the clock rang twelve times. Twelve o'clock! Scrooge was surprised. At two o'clock he had fallen asleep. - Now it was twelve o'clock. 'Have I slept for a whole day?' said Scrooge to himself. 'Or is it daytime?' Is it midday?' He pulled open the curtains around his bed. 'But it's dark. Is there something wrong with the sun?'

He got out of bed and went to the window. He looked out but he could not see anybody. The city was quiet. Yes, it was twelve o'clock at night. -

Scrooge got back into bed and closed the curtains. He was worried and he could not sleep. Then he remembered Marley's ghost. He remembered what the ghost had said. Another ghost was going to visit him at one o'clock in the morning. He lay quietly in his bed: Time passed very slowly."

The bell rang again at a quarter past twelve. Then it rang at half past twelve. Then at a quarter to one! And then it rang once more. It was one o'clock.

Suddenly, a hand pulled back the curtains around the bed. Scrooge looked up and saw the face of another ghost!

The ghost was very strange. It looked like an old man, but it was the same size as a child. Its long hair was white like an old man's hair. But its face was soft and smooth like a child's face; its arms and hands were big and strong, but its legs and feet were small.

The ghost was wearing a long white robe. It carried a branch from a green holly tree in its hand. Scrooge was not surprised to see the holly. Holly is always green in winter. But he was surprised that the ghost had summer flowers on its robe.

Something else was strange. There was a bright light coming out of the top of the ghost's head. And under its arm it carried a hat - a big, pointed cap.

Then Scrooge saw that the ghost was changing all the time. It had one leg, and then it had twenty legs. It became a body with no head. Then it became a head with no body.

'Marley said a ghost was coming at one o'clock,' said Scrooge. 'Are you the ghost Marley told me about?'

'I am,' replied the ghost quietly.

'Who are you? What are you?' Scrooge asked.

'I am the ghost of Christmas Past. I am the ghost of your past life.'

'Why have you come?' asked Scrooge.

'I have come to help you,' the ghost replied. It took hold of Scrooge's arm. 'Get out of bed. Come with me.'

The ghost's hand was very strong, but it held Scrooge gently. They went towards the window. ;

'I'm not a ghost,' said Scrooge. 'I'm a man. I'll fall if I go out of the window.'

'You will not fall,' the ghost said. It held Scrooge's arm.

They went through the window of Scrooge's room. Suddenly they were standing in the middle of a road. The city had gone and there were fields next to the road. It was a cold winter's day and there was snow on the ground.

'I know where we are!' said Scrooge. 'I lived near here when I was a boy.'



The ghost was wearing a long white robe. It carried a branch from a green holly tree, in its hand.