

## Chapter 6

### Scrooge as a Boy

Scrooge looked at the fields all around him.

'Yes,' he said. 'I lived near here when I was a boy. 1

Scrooge suddenly felt very happy. Then he felt afraid. Then he felt happy again. Then he felt sad.

'Is that a tear in your eye?' said the ghost very quietly. 'Are you crying? 1

'No, no,' said Scrooge quickly.

Scrooge and the ghost walked along the road until they saw a small town. Scrooge recognised the town. He knew die church and the river and the bridge.

Then he saw some boys riding horses. They came towards him and Scrooge recognised all the boys too. He remembered their names. The boys were very happy. They were shouting to each other. 'Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!'

'They cannot see you,' said the ghost. They are people from your past life. 1

Scrooge was happy when he heard the boys shout 'Merry Christmas!' 'Why am I happy? 1 he asked himself. 'I don't like Christmas. It's nonsense. It's humbug.'

'There is a school near here,' said the ghost. There is one child in the school. His friends have forgotten him. He is lonely.'

'I know,' replied Scrooge, 'I remember. 1

The ghost and Scrooge walked towards the school. It was an old brick building. They went into a long, cold room. There was a sad little boy sitting beside a small fire.

Scrooge sat down next to the boy. There were tears on Scrooge's face.

'Poor boy,' he said. 'I wish —'

'What do you wish?' asked the ghost.

'It's too late now,' I replied Scrooge. 'Last night a boy stood outside my office. He sang a Christmas carol. I told him to go away. Now, I wish I could give him some money.'

The ghost smiled. 'I am going to show you another Christmas in this school,' it said.

The room changed. It became darker and dirtier and older. The boy grew bigger and older. He was still lonely and sad.

Suddenly the door opened. Scrooge saw a young girl run into the room. She ran to the boy. She put her arms round the boy's neck and kissed him.

'I've come to take you home, Ebenezer,' she shouted happily. ;';;;

'Home, Frances?' I said the boy. 'Can I come home?'

'Yes,' she replied. 'Father says you can come home now. You don't have to come back to school again. Father sent me to take you home.'

'You're coming home for Christmas. The carriage is waiting outside.'

Soon Scrooge saw the children get into the carriage. He saw the horses pull the carriage away from the school.

'Your sister, Frances, was a kind girl,' the ghost said. 'And she was kind when she was a woman too. She died a long time ago, but she had a child, didn't she?'

'Yes,' said Scrooge. 'She had a son.'

'Your nephew, Fred,' said the ghost.

'Yes,' replied Scrooge.

Then suddenly Scrooge and the ghost were in a city.



*'I've come to take you home, Ebenezer,' the young girl shouted happily.*

The streets were full of people and carriages and horses. It was dark and cold. But there were bright lights in the shops. People were buying good things to eat and drink. It was a different Christmas from Scrooge's past life.