

Scrooge, Christmas Present

SPIRIT: (CHEERFULLY TO SCROOGE.) Come here, man! (SCROOGE TIMIDLY WALKS CLOSER.) I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! (SCROOGE STARES — THE SPIRIT LAUGHS.) You have never seen the like of me before!

SCROOGE: Never! (THE SPIRIT SMILES.) Spirit, conduct me where you will. I went forth last night by force, and I learned a lesson that is working now. Tonight if you have anything to teach me, let me profit by it.

SPIRIT: Touch my robe!

(SCROOGE DOES SO, AND SUDDENLY THE TWO ARRIVE IN THE STREET AREA.)

NEXT SCENE:

SCROOGE: Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

SPIRIT: I see a vacant seat in the chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

SCROOGE: Oh, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared!

SPIRIT: (STERNLY ECHOES SCROOGE'S EARLIER WORDS.) What do you care? Why, if he is to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population..

SCROOGE: (ASHAMED, TURNS AWAY.) My own words ... (TURNS BACK TO SPIRIT.) But I didn't mean —

SPIRIT: (STERNLY.) Man, who are you — that you decide what men shall live and what men shall die? It may be that — in the sight of Heaven — you are less fit to live than this poor man's child.

SCROOGE: (HEAD BENT.) It may be so, Spirit.

SPIRIT: (MORE GENTLY.) Come with me.

SCROOGE: Must we go? I want to see —

SPIRIT: My time is short. Come!