

I went to bed again, and thought about it over and over again, but could make nothing of it. Marley's Ghost bothered me exceedingly. Every time I resolved within myself that it was all a dream, my mind flew back again, was it a dream or not? Then I remembered that the Ghost had warned me of a visitation when the bell tolled one. At length it broke upon my listening ear. Ding, dong! A quarter past! Ding, dong! Half-past! Ding, dong! A quarter to it. Ding, dong! The hour itself.

(Christmas Past Enters)

SCROOGE

Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?

CHRISTMAS PAST

I am!

SCROOGE

Who, and what are you?

CHRISTMAS PAST

I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE

Why are you here?

CHRISTMAS PAST

Your welfare!

SCROOGE

Thank you for your concern, but I cannot help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Your reclamation, then. Take heed! Rise! and walk with me! Take my hand there, and you shall be upheld in more than this! (to the audience) As the words were spoken, we passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road. The city had entirely vanished. It was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground. (to Scrooge) Good Heavens! You were born and raised in this place. You were a boy here!

CHRISTMAS PAST

Do you remember the way?

SCROOGE

Remember it! I could walk it blindfolded.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Strange to have forgotten it for so many years! Let us go on.

SCROOGE

(to audience) We walked along the road, until a little market-town appeared in the distance. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards us with boys upon their backs. I knew them all. I could name them, every one.

CHRISTMAS PAST

These are but shadows of the things that have been. They cannot see or hear us. And over here, the school is not quite deserted. Look, a solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

SCROOGE

It is I, a lonely boy reading near a feeble fire.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Such a sad lonely child.

SCROOGE

Not entirely alone. He has his books to keep him company.

CHRISTMAS PAST

What is the matter?

SCROOGE

Nothing really. It's just that I just remembered there was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I would have liked to have given him something: that's all.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Let us see another Christmas!

SCROOGE

It is my younger self and my sister Fan.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Do you recall this interaction?

SCROOGE

Yes! She was so excited that our father had finally acquiesced to my return home. Finally we were to be a family again. She was quite a woman, little Fan!

CHRISTMAS PAST

Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered. But she had a large heart.

SCROOGE

Yes, she did. You're in the right spirit.

CHRISTMAS PAST

She died a woman, and had, as I think, children?

SCROOGE

One child.

CHRISTMAS PAST

True. Your nephew!

SCROOGE

Yes.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Come, let us continue. Do you know this place?

SCROOGE

Know it! I apprenticed here! Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!

(Christmas Past takes on the role of Fezziwig, with music and party activity in background)

CHRISTMAS PAST as FEZZIWIG

Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! No more work tonight. It's Christmas Eve! Clear away your work, my lads, and let's have lots of room here for dance and merriment! (To Scrooge as Christmas Past) There was nothing you and your coworkers wouldn't have cleared away, for old Fezziwig. Ah, look, In come all the young men and women employed in the business. There were dances, and games, and cake, and Cold Roast, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came when the fiddler struck up a favorite tune. Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. A small matter, to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.

SCROOGE

Small!

CHRISTMAS PAST

Why! Is it not? He has only spent a few pounds of your mortal money, three or four pounds perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves to be praised?

SCROOGE

It isn't that. It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

(Scrooge is taken aback by his sudden defense of Fezziwig)

CHRISTMAS PAST

What is the matter?

SCROOGE

Nothing particular.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Something, I think?

SCROOGE

No. It's just that I would like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.

CHRISTMAS PAST

My time grows short. Quick! Look here.

SCROOGE

It is I, older now; a man in the prime of life.

CHRISTMAS PAST

Your face does not have the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it has begun to wear the signs of worry and greed. You are not alone, Who is that fair young woman in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there are tears, which sparkle?

(Christmas Past turns her face to Scrooge, having transformed into Belle. Scrooge stumbles away from her. Taken aback at the sight of Belle.)

SCROOGE

I don't wish to speak of it. Let us take leave spirit.

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

It is I, Ebenezer. Your lost love, Belle. (she turns and steps away from him)

SCROOGE

Why do you turn away from me Belle? Is something the matter?

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

It matters little to you, very little. Another idol has replaced me; and if it can cheer you and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

SCROOGE

What Idol has replaced you?

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

A golden one. You fear poverty too much Ebenezer. All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of poverty. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the sole-passion, wealth, engulfs all else.

SCROOGE

What of it then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, and wealthier, what then? I am not changed towards you. Am I?

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

Our contract of love is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so. You are changed. When I swore devotion to you, you were another man.

SCROOGE

I was a boy.

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

Your feelings make it clear that you've changed as a person. The things that used to make us happy when we were close now just bring sadness since we've drifted apart. I don't want to go into how much I've thought about this, but trust me, I've given it a lot of consideration. It is enough that I have thought of it, and have decided that I release you.

SCROOGE

Have I ever sought release?"

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

In words. No. Never.

SCROOGE

In what, then?

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

In your changed nature; your altered spirit; in another life; another Hope. In everything that made my love of any worth to you or of any value in your sight. If this had never been between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? (Scrooge does not respond)...Ah, no...I thought not.

SCROOGE

Your thoughts are wrong.

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

I wish I could believe differently, but let's be honest. If we were to meet tomorrow, or even yesterday, would you really choose someone like me - a girl without money or social status? And even if you did choose me, wouldn't you quickly regret that decision? I'm certain you would. So I'm letting you go. I do this with a heavy heart, because I still care for the person you used to be. I hope you find happiness in the life path you've chosen.

(Belle exits)

SCROOGE

Spirit! Show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?

CHRISTMAS PAST

One shadow more!

SCROOGE

No more! No more. I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!

CHRISTMAS PAST

Shhh! Listen! It is Belle again. She is now married with children.

(We hear the *sound of children laughing and chattering*)

(Belle/Christmas Past steps forward and speaks to the audience)

CHRISTMAS PAST/BELLE

Many years later, after tucking the children in bed, as we retired to the sitting room for a cup of eggnog, my husband Charles said, "Belle, I saw an old friend of yours this

afternoon.”. Who was it I asked. “Guess,” he said. But I knew who he meant. Was it Mr. Scrooge? I asked. “Mr. Scrooge it was.” he answered, “I passed his office window; and I could scarcely help but notice him. His partner Marley, lies upon the point of death, and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.”. Charles then took me in his arms as I began to weep.

SCROOGE

Spirit! (in a broken voice), remove me from this place.

CHRISTMAS PAST

I told you these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me!” “

SCROOGE

Remove me! I cannot bear it! Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!

(Christmas Past exits)

(To audience) I was suddenly conscious of being very exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness and had barely time to reel to bed, before I sank into a heavy sleep. Come now, we must hurry!

(Scrooge leads the audience to the next scene.)