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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## A Christmas Carol

### 2: The First of Three Spirits

*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### **Narrator**

Let's continue the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, the selfish man who didn't like Christmas. Last time, the ghost of his dead partner, Marley, told Scrooge he would be visited by three spirits. They would give him a chance of escaping Marley's fate. Scrooge was in bed when the curtains were opened and he saw a face...

#### **Spirit of Christmas Past**

I'm the Ghost of Christmas Past – your past. Come with me.

#### **Narrator**

The Spirit took Scrooge through a wall and suddenly they found themselves on an open country road. The city had disappeared. Scrooge was very excited.

### **IN SCROOGE'S OLD NEIGHBOURHOOD**

#### **Scrooge**

Good heavens! I grew up in this place. That's the river! And... Oh, and I used to climb that tree...

#### **Narrator**

He remembered everybody's names. He could see them, but they couldn't see him or the Spirit. Then the Spirit invited Scrooge to go to the local school.

#### **Spirit of Christmas Past**

The school is not quite empty. There's still a child there...

#### **Scrooge**

I know! And I know who it is!

#### **Narrator**

There he was, young Scrooge, alone in a room, sad and lonely. But one Christmas, his young sister came to the school with good news.

### **AT SCROOGE'S OLD SCHOOL**

**Scrooge's little sister**

Hello, my dear brother! I've come to take you home! Home forever and ever. Father is much kinder than he used to be and he sent me in a carriage to bring you. And we'll be together all Christmas, and have the merriest time in all the world!

**Spirit of Christmas Past**

Your sister... She had a big heart! She died when she was an adult and had, I think, children. Your nephew!

**Scrooge**

Yes. She was so kind...

**Narrator**

Do I sense regret in Scrooge's voice? He behaved so badly towards his nephew... But time was running out and the Spirit of Christmas Past had another place to take Scrooge to: a big warehouse.

**AT SCROOGE'S OLD WORKPLACE****Spirit of Christmas Past**

So, do you recognise this place?

**Scrooge**

Yes! I was an apprentice here. Oh! Old Mr Fezziwig! That's my old boss!

**Mr Fezziwig**

Yo ho ho boys, no more work tonight. It's Christmas Eve! Clear away my lads, and let's have lots of room here!

**Narrator**

The warehouse was transformed into a bright ballroom in no time at all. In came a musician, Mrs Fezziwig and her three daughters, and all the young men and women employed in the business. It got old Scrooge thinking. He told the Spirit...

**Scrooge**

Mr Fezziwig had the power to make us happy or unhappy; to make our work easy or hard; pleasure or pain. The happiness he gave us is as great as if it had cost a huge pile of gold. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk Bob Cratchit just now.

**Narrator**

Is there a change in old Scrooge? Mmmm... Maybe... Well, the mood was darker when the Spirit took Scrooge to see another Christmas a few years later. Then, the young Scrooge was starting to look obsessed with money. He wasn't alone. There was a young woman by his side. Oh, she was crying...

## **IN THE PAST**

### **Scrooge's girlfriend**

Something else has taken my place; if it can cheer and comfort you as I wanted to do, I have no reason to cry. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!

### **Scrooge**

Spirit, show me no more. Take me home. Why do you torture me?

### **Narrator**

It was hard for Scrooge to see how his girlfriend left him when he started to fall in love with money. But the Spirit's work wasn't done yet. He took Scrooge to yet another Christmas a few years from then. And the greedy, old man saw her happy with a husband and children – children who he almost wished were his own. Scrooge was very depressed when he got back home: the kind sister whose son he rejected, the generous employer, the lost girlfriend – that's a lot to take in! But there were still two spirits left. What would the Spirit of Christmas Present show Scrooge? Let's see it tomorrow. I can't wait!

## **Vocabulary**

### **good heavens!**

a formal or old-fashioned way of expressing surprise; equivalent to 'Wow!'

### **carriage**

a vehicle that's pulled by a horse

**merriest** (superlative form of merry; comparative: merrier)

happiest

### **warehouse**

very large room where raw materials or manufactured products are stored

### **apprentice**

someone who works in a company to learn their job

### **Christmas Eve**

24 December – the day before Christmas

### **obsessed**

crazy about something; unable to think of anything else

### **torture**

give pain to someone

### **greedy**

somebody who is very, very keen on having a lot of money or food

### **rejected**

not given the love and attention expected