

**PAST.** I am.

**MARLEY.** Does he take this to be a vision of his green grocer?

**SCROOGE.** Who, and what are you?

**PAST.** I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

**SCROOGE.** Long past?

**PAST.** Your past.

**SCROOGE.** May I ask, please, sir, what business you have here with me?

**PAST.** Your welfare.

**SCROOGE.** Not to sound ungrateful, sir, and really, please do understand that I am plenty obliged for your concern, but, really, kind spirit, it would have done all the better for my welfare to have been left alone altogether, to have slept peacefully through this night.

**PAST.** Your reclamation, then. Take heed!

**SCROOGE.** My what?

**PAST.** [Motioning to SCROOGE and taking his arm] Rise! Fly with me! [He leads SCROOGE to the window.]

**SCROOGE.** [Panicked] Fly, but I am a mortal and cannot fly!

**PAST.** [Pointing to his heart] Bear but a touch of my hand here and you shall be upheld in more than this!

[SCROOGE touches the SPIRIT'S heart and the lights dissolve into sparkly flickers. Lovely crystals of music are heard. The scene dissolves into another. Christmas music again]

## Scene 5

[SCROOGE and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST walk together across an open stage. In the background, we see a field that is open: covered by a soft, downy snow: a country road.]

**SCROOGE.** Good Heaven! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!

[SCROOGE freezes, staring at the field beyond. MARLEY'S ghost appears beside him: takes SCROOGE'S face in his hands, and turns his face to the audience.]

**MARLEY.** You see this Scrooge: stricken by feeling. Conscious of a thousand odors floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and care long, long forgotten. [Pause] This one—this Scrooge—before your very eyes, returns to life, among the living. [To audience, sternly] You'd best pay your most careful attention. I would suggest rapt.<sup>17</sup>

[There is a small flash and puff of smoke and MARLEY is gone again.]

## Scrooge shows emotion

**PAST.** Your lip is trembling, Mr. Scrooge. And what is that upon your cheek?

**SCROOGE.** Upon my cheek? Nothing . . . a blemish on the skin from the eating of over-much grease . . . nothing . . . [Suddenly] Kind Spirit of Christmas Past, lead me where you will, but quickly! To be stagnant in this place is, for me, unbearable!

**PAST.** You recollect the way?

**SCROOGE.** Remember it! I would know it blindfolded! My bridge, my church, my winding river! [Staggers about, trying to see it all at once. He weeps again.]

**PAST.** These are but shadows of things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.

[Four jocund travelers enter, singing a Christmas song in four-part harmony—"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."]

## His contrast from the past and the present

**SCROOGE.** Listen! I know these men! I know them! **I remember the beauty of their song!**

**PAST.** But, why do you remember it so happily? It is Merry Christmas that they say to one another! **What is Merry Christmas to you, Mr. Scrooge? Out upon Merry Christmas, right? What good has Merry Christmas ever done you, Mr. Scrooge? . . .**

**SCROOGE.** [After a long pause] None. No good. None . . . [He bows his head.]

**PAST.** Look, you, sir, a school ahead. The schoolroom is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

[SCROOGE falls to the ground; sobbing as he sees, and we see, a small boy, the young SCROOGE, sitting and **weeping, bravely, alone at his desk: alone in a vast space, a void.**]

**SCROOGE.** I cannot look on him!

**PAST.** You must, Mr. Scrooge, you must.

**SCROOGE.** It's me. [Pauses; weeps] Poor boy. He lived inside his head . . . alone . . . [Pauses; weeps] poor boy. [Pauses; stops his weeping] I wish . . . [Dries his eyes on his cuff] ah! it's too late!

**PAST.** What is the matter?

**SCROOGE.** There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol outside my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that's all.

**PAST.** [Smiles; waves his hand to SCROOGE] Come. Let us see another Christmas.

[Lights out on little boy. A flash of light. A puff of smoke. Lights up on older boy]

**SCROOGE.** Look! Me, again! Older now! [Realizes] Oh, yes . . . still alone.

[The boy—a slightly older SCROOGE—sits alone in a chair, reading. The door to the

room opens and a young girl enters. She is much, much younger than this slightly older SCROOGE. **She is, say, six, and he is, say, twelve.** Elder SCROOGE and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST stand watching the scene, unseen.]

**FAN.** Dear, dear brother, I have come to bring you home. **Fan is Fred's mother**

**BOY.** Home, little Fan?

**FAN.** Yes! Home, for good and all! Father is so much kinder than he ever used to be, and home's like heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home: and he said "yes" . . . you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man and are never to come back here, but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in the world.

**BOY.** You are quite a woman, little Fan!

[Laughing; she drags at BOY, causing him to stumble to the door with her. Suddenly we hear a mean and terrible voice in the hallway. Off. It is the SCHOOLMASTER.]

**SCHOOLMASTER.** Bring down Master Scrooge's travel box at once! He is to travel!

**FAN.** Who is that, Ebenezer?

**BOY.** O! Quiet, Fan. It is the Schoolmaster, himself!

[The door bursts open and into the room bursts with it the SCHOOLMASTER.]

**SCHOOLMASTER.** Master Scrooge?

**BOY.** Oh, Schoolmaster, I'd like you to meet my little sister, Fan, sir . . .

[Two boys struggle on with SCROOGE's trunk.]

**FAN.** Pleased, sir . . . [She curtsies.]

Scrooge's  
past scarred  
him

Fezziwig is used as a comparison for Scrooge's modern-day values

**SCHOOLMASTER.** You are to travel, Master Scrooge.

**SCROOGE.** Yes, sir. I know sir . . .

[All start to exit, but FAN grabs the coattail of the mean old SCHOOLMASTER.]

**BOY.** Fan!

**SCHOOLMASTER.** What's this?

**FAN.** Pardon, sir, but I believe that you've forgotten to say your goodbye to my brother, Ebenezer, who stands still now awaiting it . . . [She smiles, curtsies, lowers her eyes.] pardon, sir.

**SCHOOLMASTER.** [Amazed] I . . . uh . . . harumph . . . uhh . . . well, then . . . [Outstretches hand] Goodbye, Scrooge.

**BOY.** Uh, well, goodbye, Schoolmaster . . .

[Lights fade out on all but BOY looking at FAN; and SCROOGE and PAST looking at them.]

**SCROOGE.** Oh, my dear, dear little sister, Fan . . . how I loved her.

**PAST.** Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered, but she had a large heart . . .

**SCROOGE.** So she had.

**PAST.** She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

**SCROOGE.** One child.

**PAST.** True. Your nephew.

**SCROOGE.** Yes.

**PAST.** Fine, then. We move on, Mr. Scrooge. That warehouse, there? Do you know it?

**SCROOGE.** Know it? Wasn't I apprenticed<sup>18</sup> there?

**18. apprenticed** (ə pren' tist) v.: Receiving financial support and instruction in a trade in return for work.

**PAST.** We'll have a look.

[They enter the warehouse. The lights crossfade with them, coming up on an old man in Welsh wig: FEZZIWIG.]

**SCROOGE.** Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig, alive again!

[FEZZIWIG sits behind a large, high desk, counting. He lays down his pen; looks at the clock: seven bells sound.]

Quittin' time . . .

**FEZZIWIG.** Quittin' time . . . [He takes off his waistcoat and laughs; calls off] Yo ho, Ebenezer! Dick!

[DICK WILKINS and EBENEZER SCROOGE—a young man version—enter the room. DICK and EBENEZER are FEZZIWIG'S apprentices.]

**SCROOGE.** Dick Wilkins, to be sure! My fellow-'prentice! Bless my soul, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!

**FEZZIWIG.** Yo ho, my boys. No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer!

[They stand at attention in front of FEZZIWIG; laughing]

Hilli-ho! Clear away, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!

[The young men clear the room, sweep the floor, straighten the pictures, trim the lamps, etc. The space is clear now. A fiddler enters, fiddling.]

Hi-ho, Matthew! Fiddle away . . . where are my daughters?

[The FIDDLER plays. Three young daughters of FEZZIWIG enter followed by six young male suitors. They are dancing to the music. All employees come in: workers, clerks, housemaids, cousins, the baker, etc.]

All dance. Full number wanted here. Throughout the dance, food is brought into the feast. It is "eaten" in dance, by the dancers. EBENEZER dances with all three of the daughters, as does DICK. They compete for the daughters, happily, in the dance. FEZZIWIG dances with his daughters. FEZZIWIG dances with DICK and EBENEZER. The music changes: MRS. FEZZIWIG enters. She lovingly scolds her husband. They dance. She dances with EBENEZER, lifting him and throwing him about. She is enormously fat. When the dance is ended, they all dance off, floating away, as does the music. SCROOGE and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST stand alone now. The music is gone.]

**PAST.** It was a small matter, that Fezziwig made those silly folks so full of gratitude.

**SCROOGE.** Small!

**PAST.** Shhh!

[Lights up on DICK and EBENEZER]

**DICK.** We are blessed, Ebenezer, truly, to have such a master as Mr. Fezziwig!

**YOUNG SCROOGE.** He is the best, best, the very and absolute best! If ever I own a firm of my own, I shall treat my apprentices with the same dignity and the same grace. We have learned a wonderful lesson from the master. Dick!

**DICK.** Ah, that's a fact, Ebenezer. That's a fact!

**PAST.** Was it not a small matter, really? He spent but a few pounds<sup>19</sup> of his mortal money on your small party. Three or four

**19. pounds** (poundz) *n.*: A common type of money used in Great Britain.

pounds, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves such praise as you and Dick so lavish now?

**SCROOGE.** It isn't that! It isn't that, Spirit. Fezziwig had the power to make us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome: a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gave is quite as great as if it cost him a fortune.

**PAST.** What is the matter?

**SCROOGE.** Nothing particular.

**PAST.** Something, I think.

**SCROOGE.** No, no. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all!

[EBENEZER enters the room and shuts down all the lamps. He stretches and yawns. The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST turns to SCROOGE: all of a sudden.]

**PAST.** My time grows short! Quick!

[In a flash of light, EBENEZER is gone, and in his place stands an OLDER SCROOGE, this one a man in the prime of his life. Beside him stands a young woman in a mourning dress. She is crying. She speaks to the man, with hostility.]

Belle

**WOMAN.** It matters little . . . to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me.

**MAN.** What idol has displaced you?

**WOMAN.** A golden one.

**MAN.** This is an even-handed dealing of the world. There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

**WOMAN.** You fear the world too much. Have I not seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you? Have I not?

## Scrooge is reminded of might have been

**SCROOGE.** No!

**MAN.** What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? Have I changed towards you?

**WOMAN.** No . . .

**MAN.** Am I?

**WOMAN.** Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man.

**MAN.** I was not another man: I was a boy.

**WOMAN.** Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart is fraught with misery now that we are two . . .

**SCROOGE.** No!

**WOMAN.** How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I *have* thought of it, and can release you . . .

**SCROOGE.** [*Quietly*] Don't release me, madame . . .

**MAN.** Have I ever sought release?

**WOMAN.** In words. No. Never.

**MAN.** In what then?

**WOMAN.** In a changed nature: in an altered spirit. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this has never been between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!

**SCROOGE.** Ah, yes!

**MAN.** You think not?

**WOMAN.** I would gladly think otherwise if I could, heaven knows! But if you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe

that you would choose a dowerless girl<sup>20</sup>—you who in your very confidence with her weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

### Foreshadows

**SCROOGE.** Please, I . . . I . . .

**MAN.** Please, I . . . I . . .

**WOMAN.** Please. You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the memory of it, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life that you have chosen for yourself . . .

**SCROOGE.** No!

**WOMAN.** Yourself . . . alone . . .

**SCROOGE.** No!

**WOMAN.** Goodbye, Ebenezer . . .

**SCROOGE.** Don't let her go!

**MAN.** Goodbye.

**SCROOGE.** No!

[*She exits. SCROOGE goes to younger man: himself.*]

You fool! Mindless loon! You fool!

**MAN.** [*To exited woman*] Fool. Mindless loon. Fool . . .

**SCROOGE.** Don't say that! Spirit, remove me from this place.

**PAST.** I have told you these were shadows of the things that have been. They are what they are. Do not blame me, Mr. Scrooge.

**SCROOGE.** Remove me! I cannot bear it!

<sup>20</sup> a dowerless (dou' er les) girl: A girl without a dowery, the property or wealth a woman brought to her husband at marriage.

[The faces of all who appeared in this scene are now projected for a moment around the stage: enormous, flimsy, silent.]

Leave me! Take me back! Haunt me no longer!

[There is a sudden flash of light: a flare. The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST is gone. SCROOGE is, for the moment, alone onstage. His bed is turned down, across the stage. A small candle burns now in SCROOGE'S hand. There is a child's cap in his other hand. He slowly crosses the stage to his bed, to sleep. MARLEY appears behind SCROOGE, who continues his long, elderly cross to bed. MARLEY speaks directly to the audience.]

**MARLEY.** Scrooge must sleep now. He must surrender to the irresistible drowsiness caused by the recognition of what was. [Pauses] The cap he carries is from ten lives past: his boyhood cap . . . **donned atop a hopeful hairy head . . . askew, perhaps, or at a rakish angle. Doffed now in honor of regret.**<sup>21</sup> Perhaps even too heavy to carry in his present state of weak remorse . . .

[SCROOGE drops the cap. He lies atop his bed. He sleeps. To audience]

He sleeps. For him, there's even more trouble ahead. [Smiles] For you? The play house tells me there's hot cider, as should be your anticipation for the specter Christmas Present and Future, for I promise you both. [Smiles again] So, I pray you hurry back to your seats refreshed and ready for a miser—to turn his coat of gray into a blazen Christmas holly-red.

[A flash of lightning. A clap of thunder. Bats fly. Ghostly music. MARLEY is gone.]

<sup>21</sup> **donned . . . regret:** To *don* and *doff* a hat means to put it on and take it off; *askew* means "crooked," and *at a rakish angle* means "having a dashing or jaunty look."

## THINKING ABOUT THE SELECTION

### Recalling

1. What relationship did Scrooge and Marley have in the past?
2. For what purpose does Scrooge's nephew come to see Scrooge?
3. What expression of Scrooge's sums up his attitude toward Christmas? Why?
4. How does Scrooge respond to the Thin Man and the Portly Man's request for money?
5. How does he respond to Cratchit's request for Christmas Day off?
6. What scenes of Scrooge's past life are revealed by the Ghost of Christmas Past?

### Interpreting

7. How do the scenes of Scrooge's past reveal a change in him?
8. How does Scrooge react to each of these scenes?

### Applying

9. Do you think people who are like Scrooge are ever really happy? Why or why not?

## ANALYZING LITERATURE

### Understanding Plot and Exposition

The plot of a play is the sequence of its incidents and events. The first part of the plot is called the **exposition**. Here the opening situation is established, major characters are introduced, and the central problem of the play is made clear. Also, here earlier events are revealed.

Once the opening situation is established, the plot of the play develops until the climax is reached. The part of the play that builds up to the climax is called the **rising action**.

1. Describe the situation established in Scene 1 of *A Christmas Carol: Scrooge and Marley*.
2. What earlier events are disclosed here?
3. What problem does Scrooge have?
4. As you were reading Act I, what thoughts or questions did you have about how the story would turn out?