

A CHRISTMAS CAROL by CHARLES DICKENS
FAN and BELLE
notes taken from ENOTES.COM

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FUNCTION OF MEMORIES

When Scrooge is shown the images of his past, the ghost's intention is to help him see how he became the man he is in the present.

- The reader sees it too.
 - Seeing Scrooge's childhood and young adulthood is very revealing.
 - We see how he begins to become obsessed with money and became the man in Stave One.
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WOMEN IN A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Upon first glance, the role of women in A Christmas Carol seems very limited.

- However, while the majority of the narrative focuses on Scrooge, minor characters such as
 - Scrooge's sister Fan,
 - his ex-fiancée Belle,
 - and even Mrs. Cratchit
 - play significant roles in his development.
 - Of these three characters, two of them have direct interactions with him, both occurring during the memories conjured by the Ghost of Christmas Past.
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FAN

Fan, Scrooge's younger sister and mother of Fred, who is now Scrooge's only living relative, played a major part in Scrooge's childhood.

FAN IN SCROOGE'S CHILDHOOD

As part of his voyage with the Ghost of Christmas Past, Scrooge visits several of his old haunts.

- He visits his old school, where he sees himself spending some of his Christmases alone.
 - He later revisits a scene from his past, where his sister, Fan, comes to the school to take Ebenezer home with her.
 - As a young boy, Scrooge was sent away to boarding school.
 - While the reader is never given a specific reason why, Fan's words suggest that Scrooge's home life was far from ideal.
 - Scrooge views one memory of himself in which Fan arrives at the boarding school, hugs him and claims "I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" She goes on to state,
 - "Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that 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!"
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FAN AND SCROOGE'S RELATIONSHIP

Fan's words illuminate her close relationship with Scrooge.

However, this happy memory is cut short by the spirit's statement that "[She died a woman.](#)"

- One of the most loving relationship that Scrooge experienced ended in a heartbreaking loss, which could explain why he has distanced himself from Fred.
 - He very well could be afraid to allow family in.

[“Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered,”](#) said the Ghost. [“But she had a large heart!”](#)

[“So she had,”](#) cried Scrooge. [“You’re right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!”](#)

[“She died a woman,”](#) said the Ghost, [“and had, as I think, children.”](#)

[“One child,”](#) Scrooge returned.

[“True,”](#) said the Ghost. [“Your nephew!”](#)

[Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, “Yes.”](#)

HOW SCROOGE MET BELLE

When Scrooge was apprenticed to Fezziwig, he was a kinder and more carefree person.

- He met and fell in love with Belle.
 - She was poor though, and had no dowry.
 - She eventually dumped Scrooge because he became more interested in money than in her.
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BELLE AND SCROOGE'S RELATIONSHIP

As Scrooge grew, he started to develop a different type of relationship with Belle.

- After the spirit takes Scrooge through the revelry of Fezziwig's Ball, he shows Scrooge a much bleaker scene.
- In this memory Scrooge is older, "[in the prime of life](#)" and sitting beside Belle, with whom he had fallen in love.
 - As was the case with Fan, Belle's words reveal the truth of the memory.
 - Belle states, "[Another idol has displaced me,](#)"
 - [meaning that Scrooge has come to love money as he once loved her.](#)
 - Scrooge protests, but Belle continues,
 - ["\[...\] if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl - you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, 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."

- Thus, Belle ends the relationship because she no longer wants him to feel obligated to someone he no longer loves.
 - For the second time, the reader sees a once beautiful become tarnished, this time by greed.

“This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

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

“What Idol has displaced you?” he rejoined. “A golden one.”

“This is the even-handed dealing of the world!” he said. “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!”

“You fear the world too much,” she answered, gently. “All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?”

“What then?” he retorted. “Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.”

She shook her head. “Am I?”

“Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man.”

SCROOGE, FAN, BELLE and HIS VIEW OF THE WORLD

These two instances mark two of the major reasons for Scrooge's misanthropic view of the world.

- One love was taken away by death,
- the other by his growing greed.
 - While their words to Scrooge are few, they speak volumes.
 - His loss of the love represented by the two women is one of the major reasons he became the cold, hateful man we meet at the start of the tale.

DICKENS, FRAN and SCROOGE

Not only was Scrooge sent off to a boarding school and separated from his immediate family as Dickens was, he also had a sister whose name was a near match for Dickens's own.

- Scrooge's sister, Fran, represents Dickens's sister, Fanny.
 - Fran represents for Scrooge what Dickens's own sister represented in his life.

- Kaplan reports that Fran is “the lovely sister-wife who represents the ideal woman and completion of the self” (19).

DICKENS and SCROOGE’S MOTHERS

There is no mention of Scrooge’s mother in A Christmas Carol, and Dickens’s own relationship with his mother remained strained throughout most of his life.

- She was the original proponent of sending the twelve-year-old Dickens to work,
 - and even after his father was released from prison, Elizabeth forced Dickens to continue working.
 - He was apparently never able to forgive her for the way she robbed him of his childhood,
 - as Kay Puttock has noticed: “When speaking of his mother, he was prone to add, ‘May God forgive her’” (3).

FANNY vs DICKENS’ MOTHER

His sister Fanny provided Dickens with the love and the affection he needed and desired, attentions he had never received from his mother.

- Just as Fanny represented love in Dickens’s life, Fran symbolizes familial love in Scrooge’s life,
 - and his memory of this relationship plays a significant role in his redemption.

DICKENS’ PURPOSE

Dickens wrote this book in order to remind people not to just walk past the needy on the street

- It worked
 - When people saw beggars in the street, they thought about Tiny Tim
 - Eventually, laws were passed providing funds for public education and ending the workhouse system

Scrooge showed people that they are responsible for the children of their society.