

**A CHRISTMAS CAROL by CHARLES DICKENS
SCROOGE'S HOMELIFE**

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SCROOGE'S HOMELIFE

We learn that Ebenezer isn't a part of it much, as he is away at boarding school.

- We also get the impression he might have been there for a while.
 - When Fan comes to retrieve him she says that their father is "[much kinder now](#)," so much so that she thought she would try one more time to ask him if Ebenezer could come home for Christmas.
 - This indicates that she has asked before and has been refused, which further implies there may be some strain in the relationship between at least father and son, if not the whole family, until recently.

‘He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her “Dear, dear brother.”

“I have come to bring you home, dear brother!” said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. “To bring you home, home, home!”

“Home, little Fan?” returned the boy.

“Yes!” said the child, brimful of glee. “Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. 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!” said the child, opening her eyes, “and are never to come back here; but first, we’re to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.”

“You are quite a woman, little Fan!” exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried, “Bring down Master Scrooge’s box, there!” and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of “something” to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. Master Scrooge’s trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the children bade the schoolmaster good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the garden-sweep: the quick wheels dashing the hoar-frost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray.

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

SYMPATHY FOR SCROOGE

This scene helps readers view Scrooge as a more sympathetic character.

- He was treated cruelly by his father for years and often had to spend Christmas alone.
 - Such wounds don't easily heal.

- Readers understand some of what made Scrooge such a hard man through this glimpse of his childhood home.
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THE EFFECTS OF SCROOGE'S DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FATHER

Although the change in Ebenezer's father is not explained, it is interesting that Ebenezer himself becomes so cruel and harsh later in life only to also suddenly change right at Christmas, just as his father did.

- In addition to the small amount we can glean about his father, we can also see that Ebenezer and his sister are very close.
 - Although she is much younger than he is, they obviously adore one another, as we can tell by the way they interact:
 - "She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her" (Stave II).
 - He goes on to agree with the Ghost of Christmas Past when he says she had a big heart.
 - From this Stave we learn nothing of the rest of Ebenezer's family, including his mother.

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.