

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** (*awkward*) Hello, Belle. Sorry I'm late.

**BELLE:** (*softly*) I thought you might not come. I know how busy you are.  
I matter to you, very little. Another idol has replaced me.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** What idol has replaced you?

**BELLE:** A golden one. There is nothing which gives you such passion as money.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** Dear Belle, that's not fair. Perhaps I've grown wiser...

**BELLE:** I'm afraid it is quite fair. When we were engaged, we were both poor.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** Was it better then? Better to be poor?

**BELLE:** Better, at least, to be happy. You are changed. You were another man then.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** (*impatiently*) I was a boy! You blame me because I've grown wiser? Have I ever tried to break our engagement?

**BELLE:** In words? No. Never.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** In what, then?

**BELLE:** In a changed nature; in an altered spirit. In everything that made my love of any value in your sight. So... I release you from your promise.

**YOUNG SCROOGE:** (*shocked*) Belle!

**BELLE:** (*fighting tears*) Oh, at first, it may cause you pain to lose me – a very brief pain. But soon it will dim, like a half-remembered dream – an unprofitable dream. And you will be glad to awake from such a dream. May you be happy in the life you have chosen, Ebenezer...

**SCROOGE:** Spirit... why do you delight to torture me?

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** I show you only the shadows you must see. Why didn't you follow her?

**SCROOGE:** Belle was... content with our life, with what we had. I wanted more, for both of us. I wanted financial success, which I have achieved, I might add.

**GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST:** Congratulations. You have explained what you have gained. Now, I will show you what you have lost.