The main idea

Bob’s warmth exposes Scrooge’s cold use of authority. His family’s vulnerability connects an employer’s decisions to life beyond the workplace.

Character development

Endures harsh employment

Nurtures his family

Imagines devastating loss

Receives practical support

Cold work, warm affection

“one coal” — Narrator about Bob’s fire, Stave 1

“Tiny Tim upon his shoulder” — Narrator, Stave 3

The minimal fuel makes inequality concrete. Carrying Tim turns care into a visible physical act; Bob’s limited income does not imply limited affection.

Gratitude under pressure

“the Founder of the Feast” — Bob about Scrooge, Stave 3

“I’ll raise your salary” — Scrooge to Bob, Stave 5

Bob’s toast is generous but meets Mrs Cratchit’s anger. The pay rise answers workplace exploitation more directly than praise: changed authority improves the family’s resources.

Develop the interpretation

Bob’s kindness need not mean the working conditions are acceptable. Mrs Cratchit’s criticism prevents the reader from confusing gratitude with justice.

Recall question

How does the pay rise connect the office to the family meal?