The main idea

The first spirit makes remembering an active moral experience. It shows Scrooge both wounds and alternatives to the life he chose.

Character development

Appears as changing light

Reveals loneliness

Recalls generosity

Exposes lost love

Revelation meets resistance

“a bright clear jet of light” — Narrator, Stave 2

“could not hide the light” — Narrator as Scrooge presses down the cap, Stave 2

Light makes memory illuminating and difficult to suppress. Scrooge’s attempt to extinguish it dramatises resistance to truths he is beginning to recognise.

Care and painful reform

“Your welfare!” — Ghost, Stave 2

“Your reclamation, then” — Ghost, Stave 2

The spirit’s correction insists that helping Scrooge may require discomfort. The visit is not nostalgic entertainment: recollection must change his understanding of himself.

Develop the interpretation

The childlike and aged appearance suggests the strange nearness and distance of memory. The scenes belong to Scrooge’s past, not the spirit’s personal development.

Recall question

Why must Scrooge remember Fezziwig’s kindness as well as his own loneliness?

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