

## BELLE SIDE

**Narrator:** "Again, Scrooge saw himself He was older now; a man in the prime of life. He was not alone."

**Bell:** "It matters little-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."

**Young Scrooge:** "What Idol has displaced you?"

**Bell:** "A golden one."

**Young Scrooge:** This is the even-handed dealing of the world! 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."

**Bell:** "You fear the world too much. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?"

**Young Scrooge:** "What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you. Am I?"

**Bell:** "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. When it was made, you were another man.

**Young Scrooge:** "I was a boy."

**Bell:** "Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I can and will release you."

**Young Scrooge:** "Have I ever sought release?"

**Bell:** "In words, no, never."

**Young Scrooge:** "In what then?"

**Bell:** "In a changed nature, in an altered spirit, in everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even believe that you would choose a dowerless girl – you who weigh everything by Gain?"

**Scrooge:** "You think not?"

**Bell:** "Ah, no. I release you, with a full heart, for the love of him you once were."

(She begins to leave, stops.)

"You may-the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will- have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen."

(Belle exits.)