



'Hard and sharp as flint' (Stave One)

REVISION

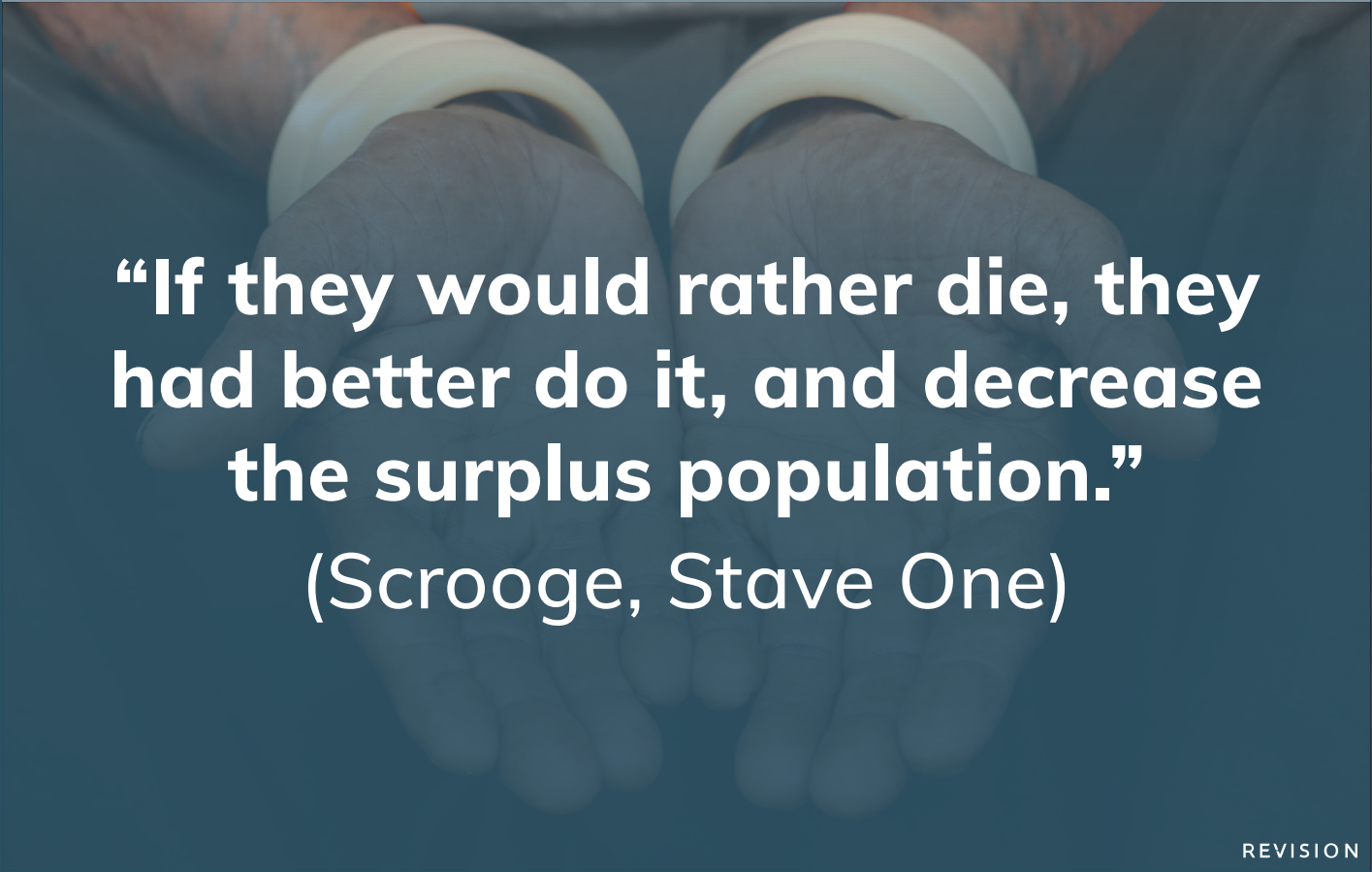
Explanation:

This **simile** compares Scrooge to flint, which is a rock historically used for making tools and starting fires by striking steel against the sharp edge of the stone. On the one hand, this **characterises** Scrooge as someone who is **metaphorically** hard and cold: a person with no emotions, like a stone. However, Dickens suggests there is hope for Scrooge, since flint also has the potential to create fire, which itself is a **symbol** of emotional warmth within the novella.

Themes:

Redemption, Christmas Spirit, Poverty

REVISION



“If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.”
(Scrooge, Stave One)

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Explanation:

Scrooge is unfeeling when it comes to the plight of the poor. He supports Malthusian theory, which advocated population management as a prevention for poverty. Scrooge uses the **mathematical adjective** ‘surplus’ when speaking about people, which shows a mindset predisposed to think of poor people as being in excess of what is actually useful. There is no chance that Scrooge will give to charity, even at Christmas. **Verbs** such as ‘die’ show Scrooge is hard-hearted at this point in the story, which is exactly what Dickens intended, to enable his transformation by the end of the novella.

Themes:

Redemption, Christmas Spirit, Poverty

REVISION

**“I wear the chain I
forged in life.”**
(Marley’s Ghost, Stave One)

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Explanation:

Marley has appeared to Scrooge on the anniversary of his death seven years previously. Like the other ghosts of the novella, his physical appearance is important, particularly the chain he is forced to drag around with him as punishment for his short-sighted obsession with money when he was alive. The chain **symbolises** entrapment; Dickens’ **message** is that prioritising money will not bring you emotional fulfilment. The fact that Marley ‘forged’ it himself shows it was all his own doing; he created the **metaphorical** chain while he lived his life by ignoring those who really needed his attention – the poor.

Themes:

Poverty, Redemption, the Supernatural

REVISION



**‘From the crown of its head there
sprung a bright clear jet of light’
(Stave Two)**

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Explanation:

The physical appearance of the Ghost of Christmas Past is very significant. Light, and the absence of it, is a key **symbol** throughout the novella. When the spirit appears to Scrooge, it emanates a **literal** and **metaphorical** light from its head. This **symbolises** knowledge (the learning from past mistakes) and hope (for the future). Scrooge will need to accept the light that is offered to him since his first reaction is to try to put it out.

Themes:

Redemption, the Supernatural

REVISION



**“Why, it’s old Fezziwig!
Bless his heart...”**
(Scrooge, Stave Two)

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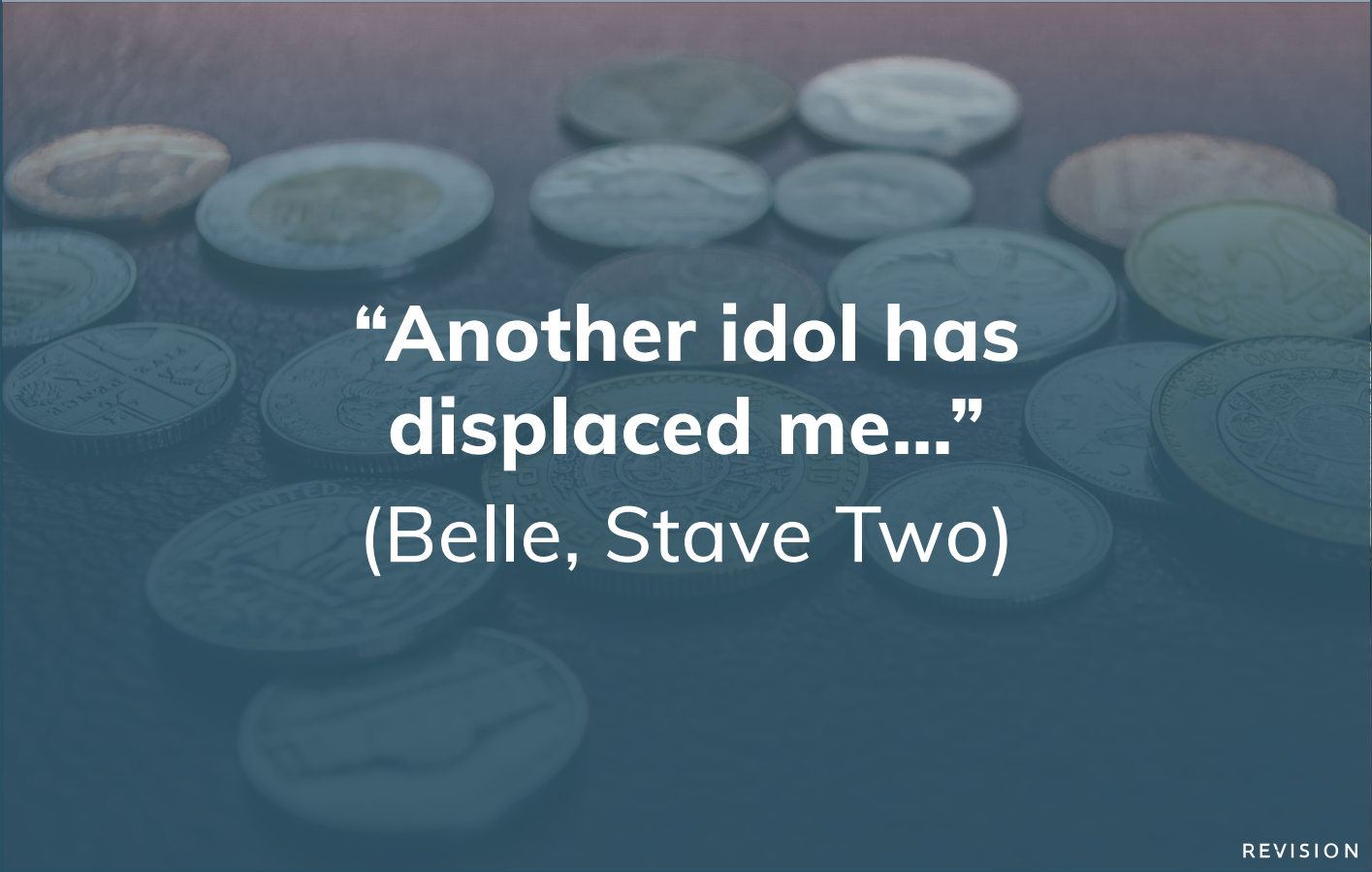
Explanation:

Fezziwig is the **antithesis** of Scrooge; he stands for generosity, kindness and communal values. The **exclamation mark** indicates how much happiness the memory of his former boss brings for Scrooge. This is a lesson to learn since Bob Cratchit will not remember Scrooge in this way if he does not change his ways. The idea of Scrooge blessing Fezziwig’s heart is also in direct **contrast** with the hard-natured Scrooge who would not give to charity to help the poor.

Themes:

Relationships, Poverty, Memory

REVISION



“Another idol has
displaced me...”
(Belle, Stave Two)

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Explanation:

Belle breaks off her engagement to Scrooge because he now considers the acquisition of money more necessary than their union. The **noun** ‘idol’ suggests the element of worship that Scrooge has for his money and the **verb** ‘displaced’ is very unemotional, reflecting the love that Belle is now withdrawing as a result of Scrooge’s choices.

Themes:

Relationships, Redemption, the Supernatural, Love, Family

REVISION



**‘Such a mighty blaze went
roaring up the chimney’
(Stave Three)**

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Explanation:

Fire, or the absence of one, is **symbolic** within the novella. The Cratchit family roast their chestnuts on the fire in Stave Three and the scene exudes love and emotional security. Scrooge is known for not wanting to spend money on coal at work. When the Ghost of Christmas Present creates a roaring fire in Scrooge’s living room, it **foreshadows** Scrooge’s future emotional warmth since it is in this stave that he begins to empathise with the poor, in the form of the Cratchit family. At the end of the novella, once Scrooge’s **redemption** is complete, he will tell Bob Cratchit to make up the fires.

Themes:

Christmas Spirit, the Supernatural, Redemption, Family

REVISION



**‘His threadbare clothes
darned up and brushed,
to look seasonable’
(Stave Three)**

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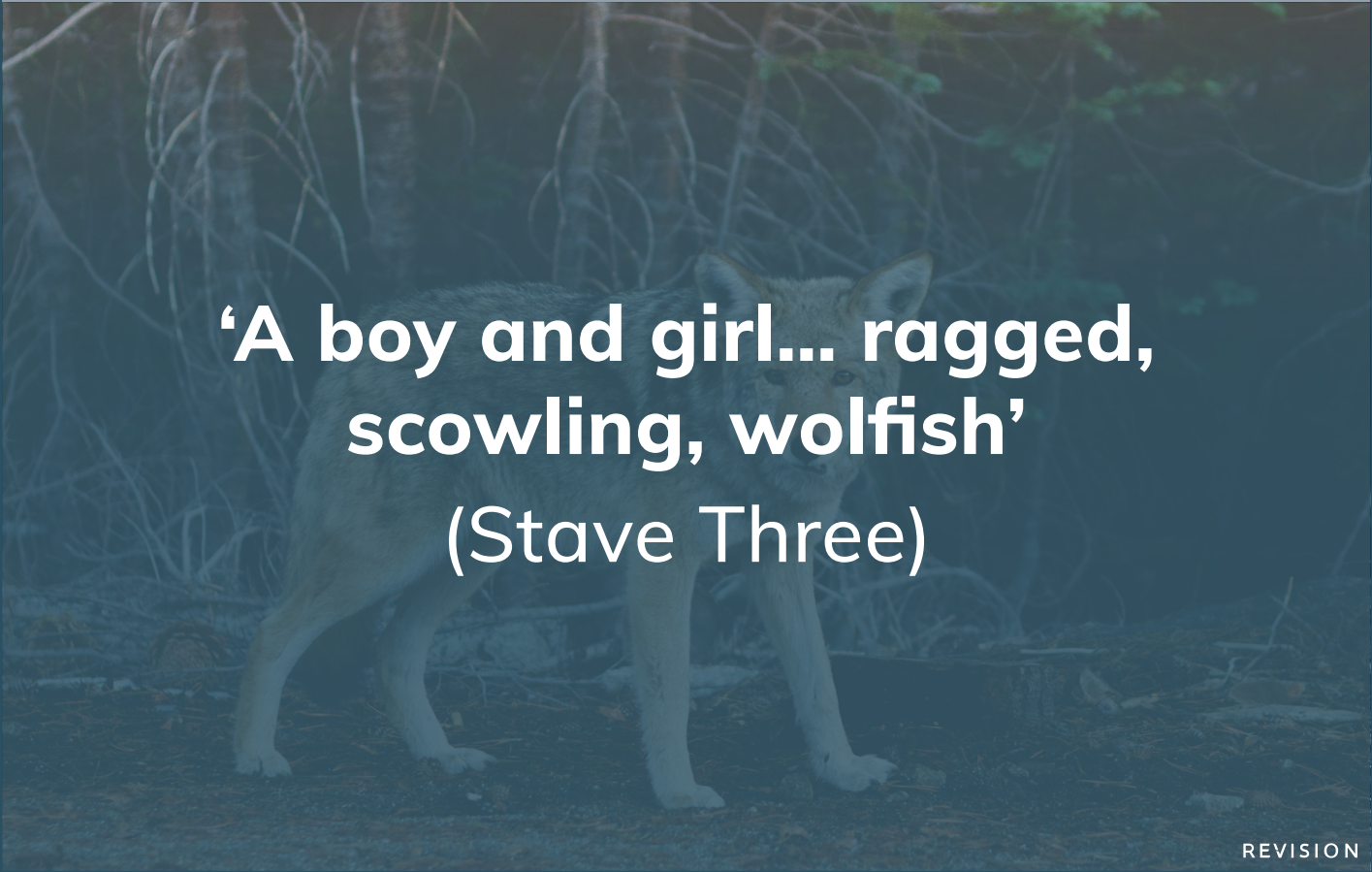
Explanation:

This describes Bob Cratchit’s valiant efforts to look his best for the season, despite the poor state of his clothes. The **adjective** ‘threadbare’ suggests he really needs new ones and the **verbs** ‘darned’ and ‘brushed’ imply the level of effort needed to keep his clothes wearable. The **imagery** of a poor man trying his best against all the odds creates empathy in the reader.

Themes:

Poverty, Christmas Spirit, Family, Redemption

REVISION



**‘A boy and girl... ragged,
scowling, wolfish’
(Stave Three)**

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Explanation:

At the end of Stave Three, two desperate children, Ignorance and Want, are revealed. They are **allegorical** characters to **symbolise** the social inequalities Dickens was attempting to highlight. They remain ignorant as they have no access to education. They want, or lack, basics such as food and shelter because nobody is looking after them. Dickens deliberately describes them as threatening to shock his readers; because of society ignoring the problem, such children have become like animals, acting on instinct (‘wolfish’) to stay alive. The **asyndetic listing** highlights the negative aspects of what should be innocent children.

Themes:

Poverty, Charity, Redemption (“Are there no prisons?”)

REVISION



‘Shrouded in a deep black garment’ (Stave Four)

REVISION

Explanation:

The physical appearance of the final spirit, like that of the others, is **symbolic**. The colour black has **connotations** of mystery and death; the spirit is deliberately frightening to Scrooge so that he will change. The word ‘shrouded’ similarly has **connotations** of death and also suggests the spirit is concealing something from Scrooge, which he is. Scrooge discovers he will die a lonely death as things stand.

Themes:

Death, the Supernatural, Redemption

REVISION



**‘They sat grouped about their
spoil, in the scanty light’
(Stave Four)**

REVISION

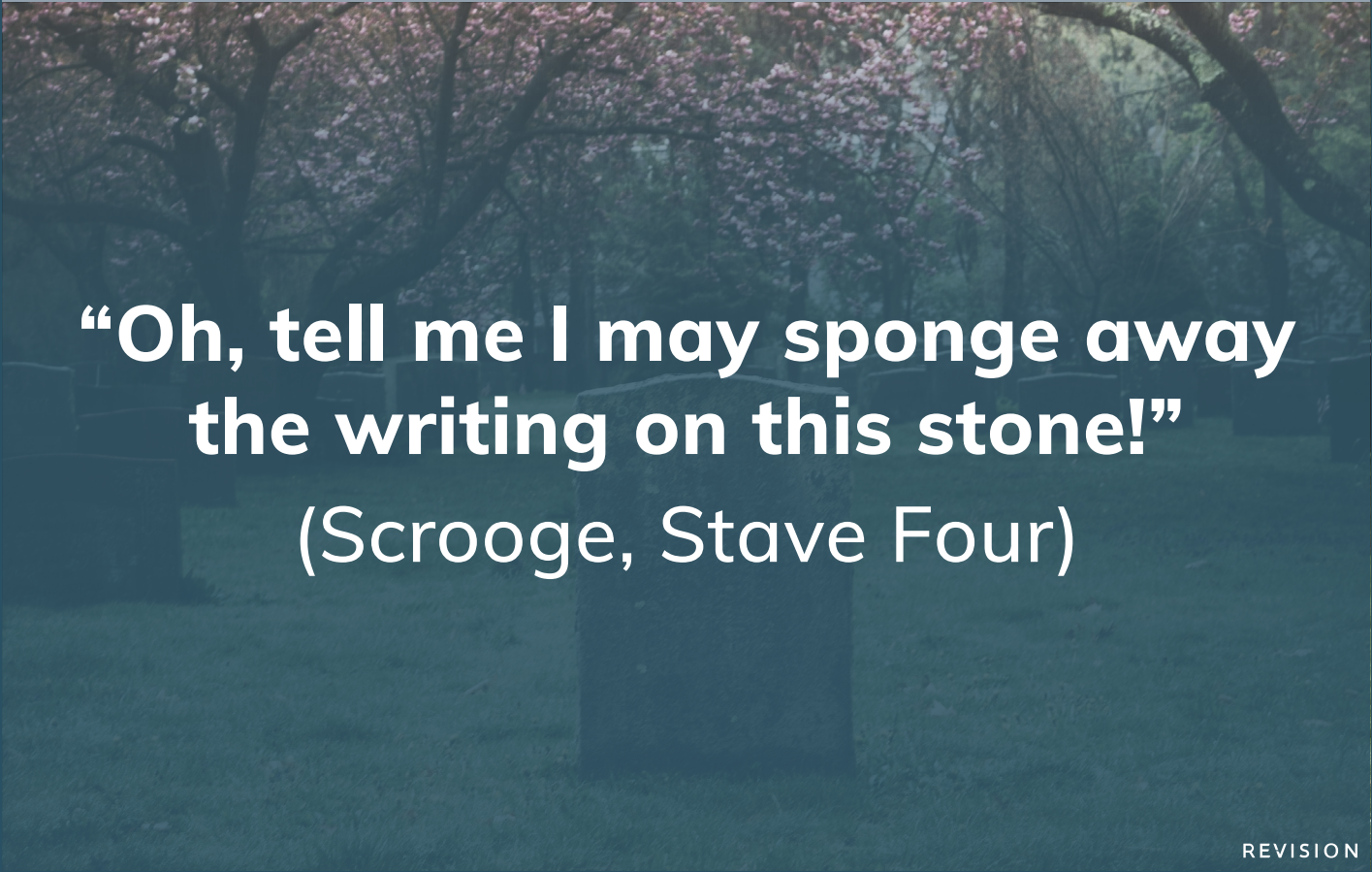
Explanation:

Dickens describes the thieves who have stolen Scrooge’s possessions with threatening **imagery**. It is as if they are in cahoots against him, ‘grouped’ as they are. The **noun** ‘spoil’ refers to goods taken illegally yet, given what we have learned about Ignorance and Want, we can understand that they might have become desperate. The **adjective** ‘scanty’ refers in literal terms to the lack of light, creating an eerie feel to the scene, but its wider meaning is to have an insufficient amount of something. This idea could apply to their entire lives, which is why they have been driven to steal.

Themes:

Poverty, Charity, Redemption

REVISION



**“Oh, tell me I may sponge away
the writing on this stone!”
(Scrooge, Stave Four)**

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Explanation:

Literally, Scrooge wants to make his name disappear from the gravestone he sees but, **metaphorically**, he does not want to die lonely and hated; he intends to become a better man given the chance. The **exclamation mark** shows the desperate emotion Scrooge feels, along with his new enthusiasm to live a different life.

Themes:

Redemption, Death, Christmas Spirit, Family

REVISION

“I am as light as a feather... I am as merry as a schoolboy.”
(Scrooge, Stave Five)

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Explanation:

There are four consecutive **similes** in total but these two are particularly interesting. The lightness Scrooge feels is in **contrast** to the imagery of the chain that Marley had to bear in Stave Two and which Scrooge was also heading towards. Just as the chain was a **metaphor** for being weighed down by financial concerns, the feather is a **metaphor** for that weight having been lifted. Feathers also **symbolise** wisdom and freedom, both of which Scrooge has now gained. The second **simile** here compares Scrooge to a care-free schoolboy; the **connotations** of the reference might be that Scrooge has learned his own lessons during the spirits' visits and is happier for the knowledge.

Themes:

Redemption, Christmas Spirit

REVISION

“Make up the fires, and buy
another coal-scuttle...”
(Stave Five)

REVISION

Explanation:

Fire is a recurring **motif** throughout the story. Now that Scrooge has been redeemed, it is fitting that he instructs Bob Cratchit to add extra coal to the usually pitiful fires burning in the office. The bigger the fire, the warmer Scrooge’s heart! He even tells Bob to buy another bucket for storing the extra coal in and the **verb** ‘buy’ shows Scrooge really does mean it as he hardly ever parted with his money before.

Themes:

Redemption, Poverty, Family, Christmas Spirit

REVISION



**‘To Tiny Tim... he was
a second father.’
(Stave Five)**

REVISION

Explanation:

Scrooge finds pleasure in family relationships again in Stave Five. Along with reconnecting with his nephew, Scrooge takes a keen interest in Tiny Tim and is able to become the closest to a father that he will ever be.

Dickens illustrates to the reader, through Scrooge’s interest in Tiny Tim, that it is possible to care for the poor even if you think they are nothing to do with you. The **allegorical message** of the tale is that such generosity will bring its own rewards, as Scrooge clearly demonstrates through his own emotional fulfilment.

Themes:

Redemption, Family, Relationships, Poverty

REVISION