

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

A detailed illustration of a snowy Victorian street scene. In the foreground, a horse-drawn carriage is being pulled by two white horses. A man in a dark coat and top hat stands next to the carriage, holding the reins. To the left, a group of people in period clothing are gathered around a large, decorated Christmas tree. The street is covered in snow, and the buildings in the background are multi-story, ornate structures with snow on their roofs. A street lamp with a glowing lantern is visible on the left side of the street.

Revision

LO: To revise the key characters, themes, symbols and plot of A Christmas Carol

# Characters



**Ebenezer Scrooge** - The miserly owner of a London counting-house, a nineteenth century term for an accountant's office. The three spirits of Christmas visit the stodgy bean-counter in hopes of reversing Scrooge's greedy, cold-hearted approach to life.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.



# Characters



**Bob Cratchit** -  
Scrooge's clerk, a kind, mild, and very poor man with a large family. Though treated harshly by his boss, Cratchit remains a humble and dedicated employee.

# Characters



'God Bless us Everyone!'

**Tiny Tim** - Bob Cratchit's young son, crippled from birth. Tiny Tim is a highly sentimentalized character who Dickens uses to highlight the tribulations of England's poor and to elicit sympathy from his middle and upper class readership.



# Characters



**Jacob Marley** - In the living world, Ebenezer Scrooge's equally greedy partner. Marley died seven years before the narrative opens. He appears to Scrooge as a ghost condemned to wander the world bound in heavy chains. Marley hopes to save his old partner from suffering a similar fate.

But you were always a good man of business, Jacob," faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

"Business!" cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. "**Mankind was my business.** The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

# Characters

**The Ghost of Christmas Past** - The first spirit to visit Scrooge, a curiously childlike apparition with a glowing head. He takes Scrooge on a tour of Christmases in his past. The spirit uses a cap to dampen the light emanating from his head.

'It wore a tunic of the purest white, and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.' (Stave 2)



# Characters



**The Ghost of Christmas Present** - The second spirit to visit Scrooge, a majestic giant clad in a green robe. His lifespan is restricted to Christmas Day. He escorts Scrooge on a tour of his contemporaries' Holiday celebrations.

It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust. (Stave 3)

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# Characters



**The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come** - The third and final spirit to visit Scrooge, a silent phantom clad in a hooded black robe. He presents Scrooge with an ominous view of his lonely death.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.  
(Stave 4)



# Characters



Fred - Scrooge's nephew, a genial man who loves Christmas. He invites Scrooge to his Christmas party each and every year, only to be refused by his grumpy uncle.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

# Characters



**Fezziwig** - The jovial merchant with whom the young Scrooge apprenticed. Fezziwig was renowned for his wonderful Christmas parties.

"Hilli-ho!" cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. "Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here. Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer."

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. (Stave 2)



# Characters



**Belle** - A beautiful woman who Scrooge loved deeply when he was a young man. Belle broke off their engagement after Scrooge became consumed with greed and the lust for wealth. She later married another man.

"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. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man."

"I was a boy," he said impatiently.

"Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are," she returned. "I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you."

# Characters



**The Portly Gentlemen** - Two gentlemen who visit Scrooge at the beginning of the tale seeking charitable contributions. Scrooge promptly throws them out of his office. Upon meeting one of them on the street after his visitations, he promises to make lavish donations to help the poor.

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and Destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."



# Minor Characters

**Martha Cratchit** - Bob's oldest daughter, who works in a milliner's shop. (A milliner is a person who designs, produces, and sells hats.)

**Peter Cratchit** - Bob's oldest son, who inherits his father's stiff-collared shirt for Christmas.

**Fan** - Scrooge's sister; Fred's mother. In Scrooge's vision of Christmases past, he remembers Fan picking him up from school and walking him home.

**Mrs. Cratchit** - Bob's wife, a kind and loving woman.

**Peter Cratchit** - Bob's oldest son, who inherits his father's stiff-collared shirt for Christmas.

# Basic Plot



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# Basic Plot

**Stave 1:** Scrooge sees Fred and the charity collectors. He is visited by Marley.

**Stave 2:** The Ghost of Christmas Past visits. It shows Scrooge his childhood at school, his sister Fan, Fezziwig's party, Belle and Belle's married life.

**Stave 3:** The Ghost of Christmas Present visits. It shows Scrooge the Cratchits' Christmas and Tiny Tim, his nephew Fred's party where they discuss Scrooge and finally Ignorance and Want.

**Stave 4:** The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come visits. It shows Scrooge a number of scenes related to an unnamed man's death, as well as Tiny Tim's death. Finally Scrooge sees his own name on a tombstone.

**Stave 5:** Scrooge wakes up on Christmas Day. He sends a turkey to the Cratchits, gives a charity collector money and goes to Fred's party. He changes his ways forever and Tiny Tim lives.

# Stave One

## **Scrooge makes his clerk work in the cold**

- The novel begins on Christmas Eve with Scrooge working in his counting-house. His clerk, Bob Cratchit, is working hard and trying to warm himself over a candle.

## **He refuses Fred's invitation**

- Scrooge's cheery nephew Fred arrives and invites his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge responds with a grumpy 'Bah Humbug!'

## **Scrooge dismisses the charity collectors**

- Two gentlemen enter Scrooge's office collecting for the poor and homeless. Scrooge refuses to give them a donation. He says the poor should die and 'decrease the surplus population.'

## **Scrooge is visited by Marley**

- Scrooge arrives home and sees Marley's face in his door knocker. Jacob's ghost arrives, rattling his chains-the ones he created in life by being so horrible. He tells Scrooge he will be visited by three spirits.



# Stave One-Key Quotes

Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

'Bah!' said Scrooge,  
'Humbug!'

'If they're going to die they better do it and decrease the surplus population!'

I wear the chain I forged in life! I made it link by link and yard by yard!

solitary as an oyster.

'A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!' cried a cheerful voice.

Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner.

# Stave Two

## The Ghost of Christmas Past

As promised by Marley's ghost, Scrooge is visited as the bell tolls one o'clock by the first of three spirits: the Ghost of Christmas Past. The apparition is 'a strange figure' seeming to be both an old man and child, with a light coming out of its head.

- 1.) The ghost shows Scrooge scenes from his childhood-where he spent Christmas alone and once was visited by his sister Fan.
- 2.) He then shows him a lively scene with his cheerful old boss, Fezziwig. Scrooge thinks about how he's treated his own employee Bob Cratchit.
- 3.) Next he takes Scrooge to a time where his younger self is with his fiancée, Belle. He sees her telling the younger Scrooge how she must leave him because he has changed and seems to love money more than her.
- 4.) Then they see the girl become a woman, with her happy family. Scrooge is upset and the ghost returns him to his bed.



# Stave Two-Key Quotes

It was a strange figure-like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man

'A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.' Scrooge knew it and he sobbed.

'but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.'

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."  
"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

'I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all.'

'Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so...You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.'

# Stave Three

## **The Ghost of Christmas Present**

This ghost appears as a father Christmas character-long hair, green robes and a holly wreath on his head.

- 1.) He takes Scrooge to the Cratchit family where he sees the humility with which the family tolerates its poverty. Bob Cratchit toasts Scrooge, even though his wife speaks her mind about disliking him.
- 2.) The sight of Tiny Tim, who is sick and weak, saddens him. The ghost tells Scrooge he sees an empty chair and crutch without an owner in the future.
- 3.) Next the spirit shows Scrooge his nephew and friends as they celebrate and joke about how Scrooge is a 'ridiculous fellow'.
- 4.) Lastly, the ghost shows Scrooge two poor children, Ignorance and Want.



# Stave Three-Key Quotes

"I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's," said Mrs. Cratchit, "not for his."

I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always

Conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now.

This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both

'Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family.'

'God bless us every one!'

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved..." "No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit. Say he will be spared."

# Stave Four

## **The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come**

The final spirit is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come who leads Scrooge through **scenes relating to a man's death.**

1. Business colleagues of Scrooge's discussing a man's death-they don't appear to care and only plan to go to get a free lunch.
2. Joe and Mrs Dilber in the slums-they have stolen items from a dead man: his shirt, curtains from his bed, sheets, etc.
3. They visit the dead man's bedchamber where the body is covered by a sheet. No one is there to mourn him. Scrooge asks to see someone who has emotion tied to this man's death.
4. A young couple (woman's name is Caroline) are relieved that he is dead as they owed him money and will have some time now. Scrooge asks to see tenderness connected to a death.
5. They see The Cratchits after Tiny Tim has died. They are devastated.
6. Finally the ghost shows Scrooge the gravestone of the man the people have been talking about. It bears the name: Ebenezer Scrooge.
7. Scrooge begs for the opportunity to change his ways and prays it isn't too late.



# Stave Four-Key Quotes

I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good...I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart.

I don't mind going [to the funeral] if a lunch is provided.

"If he wanted to keep them after he was dead, a wicked old screw," pursued the woman, "why wasn't he natural in his lifetime?"

"We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline."

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year...Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

# Stave Five

## **Scrooge's Redemption**

- Scrooge wakes up full of a zest for life. He proclaims himself as 'giddy as a drunken man'. He calls out of the window to a boy who tells him it is Christmas Day and Scrooge is delighted to find the spirits have done all their work in one night.
- He gives the boy half a crown to buy the prize turkey from the butchers and have it delivered to the Cratchits.
- Then he dresses and goes out into the street where he meets one of the charity collectors from the previous day. Scrooge whispers his donation to the man, who is very grateful.
- Then Scrooge goes to church and at last to his nephew Fred's for Christmas dinner.
- The next day, Scrooge offers Bob Cratchit a pay-rise and promises to help look after his family. Tiny Tim lives and Scrooge becomes like a second father to him
- He learns how to laugh at himself and eventually becomes known as a man who knows how to celebrate Christmas.



# Stave Five-Key Quotes

I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody!

I'll send it to Bon Cratchit's!" whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. "He shan't know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim.'

He went to church, and walked about the streets...and found that everything could yield him pleasure.

"I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family"

to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father.

it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.

# Themes

**Allegory:** a type of narrative in which characters and events represent particular ideas or theme

In this novel, Scrooge represents greed, apathy and all that stands in opposition to the Christmas spirit.

Bob Crachit represents the English poor who suffer under the rich.



# Themes

**Allegory:** a type of narrative in which characters and events represent particular ideas or theme

The Ghost of Christmas Past represents memory. The aged appearance of the childlike figure touches on the role of memory as a force that connects the different stages of a person's life. His glowing head suggests the illuminating power of the mind.

# Themes

**Allegory:** a type of narrative in which characters and events represent particular ideas or theme

The Ghost of Christmas Present serves as the **central symbol of the Christmas ideal--generosity, goodwill, and celebration**. Appearing on a throne made of food, the spirit evokes thoughts of prosperity and merriment. The Ghost of Christmas Present also **represents empathy** enabling Scrooge to not only see the Cratchits but to feel the sorrow and hardships of their daily toil.



# Theme of Loneliness and Isolation

- Scrooge seems to choose his own isolation so we don't feel sympathy for him. Fred invites him for dinner every year and every year he refuses.
- We see a young, lonely Scrooge at school neglected at school with the Ghost of Christmas Past-he is emotionally affected by this when he sees it.
- By the end of the novel, he realises he has been wrong to isolate himself and joins Fred's party.
- The message is that personal isolation isn't a good thing.

# Theme of Time

- The ghosts are time travellers who are able to show Scrooge his past, present and to warn him of his possible future.
- The pace is increased by the threat of Tiny Tim's death and Scrooge's own death-he needs to change quickly.
- The clocks striking emphasise how quickly things are moving.
- Time is manipulated so that Scrooge wakes up on Christmas Day-it resets itself. Without this Scrooge would wake up after Christmas Day so he wouldn't have been able to change as clearly.



# Theme of Compassion & Forgiveness

- The entire lesson in a Christmas Carol is that people should be compassionate and forgiving.
- Scrooge learns to be compassionate from those around him who are-Fred, Fezziwig, the Cratchits, etc.
- Scrooge is forgiven by everyone at the end (Fred, the Cratchits, people in the city) which shows it's never too late to achieve redemption.

# Theme of Wealth

- Scrooge is only interested in money-he doesn't spend it but is obsessed with making it. He is incredibly frugal and a miser.
- Scrooge's refusal to donate shows his own selfishness but also the selfishness of the wealthy in Victorian society.
- Scrooge sees Fred and the Crachits-neither are wealthy but both are much happier.
- The thieves dividing up Scrooge's belongings at the end show an obsession with money as well-but more because of their circumstances.



# Context-The Poor Laws

- **The Poor Law** was the way that the poor were helped in 1815. The law said that **each parish had to look after its own poor**. If you were unable to work then you were given some money to help you survive.
- However, the cost of the Poor Law was increasing every year. By 1830 it cost about **£7 million** and criticism of the law was mounting.
- The money was raised by taxes on middle and upper class people, causing **resentment**. They complained that money went to people who were lazy and did not want to work.
- Critics also suggested that allowance systems made the situation worse because **they encouraged poor people to have children** that they could not afford to look after.

# Context-The Poor Laws

- In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed by Parliament. This was designed to reduce the cost of looking after the poor as it stopped money going to poor people except in exceptional circumstances.
- **Now if people wanted help they had to go into a workhouse to get it.**
- The poor were given clothes and food in the workhouse in exchange for several hours of manual labour each day. Families were split up inside the workhouse. People had to wear a type of uniform, follow strict rules and were on a bad diet of bread and watery soup.
- Conditions were made so terrible that only those people who desperately needed help would go there.



# Context-The Poor

- In the book Dickens is criticising the Poor Laws
- He exposes the flaws of the unfair system of government that essentially restricts the underclass to life in prison or in a workhouse. (Dickens' own father served time in debtor's prison.)
- Dickens' sympathetic portrayal of Bob Cratchit and his family puts a human face on the lower classes. Through Scrooge's implicit defence of the Poor Laws (his argument that prisons are the only "charity" he cares to support), Dickens dismisses the excuses of the indifferent upper class as an irresponsible, selfish, and cruel defence.

# Context-The Poor

- The scene at Bob Cratchit's house is really important.
- Dickens uses the opportunity to put forth his own criticism of the unfeeling members of the disconnected upper class and to present a highly emotive portrait of the lower classes.





# Context-The Poor

- Cities were overpopulated due to the industrial revolution
- People worked long hours in factories
- Crime and poverty became massive issues in the city



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# Context-The Victorian Christmas

- The first Christmases as we recognise them today were celebrated in the 1800s-Prince Albert brought a number of traditions with him from Germany when he married Queen Victoria.
- Turkey as their main meal started in this time-they were very expensive and a luxurious item. IN the book the Cratchits can't afford a turkey so they have a goose.
- Dickens believed it was a time for peace and goodwill to everyone despite their social class and that it was a time for helping others.

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