

SIMPLIFIED READERS

A Christmas Carol

CHARLES DICKENS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Charles Dickens

A1

A1

LEVEL 1

Audio Files



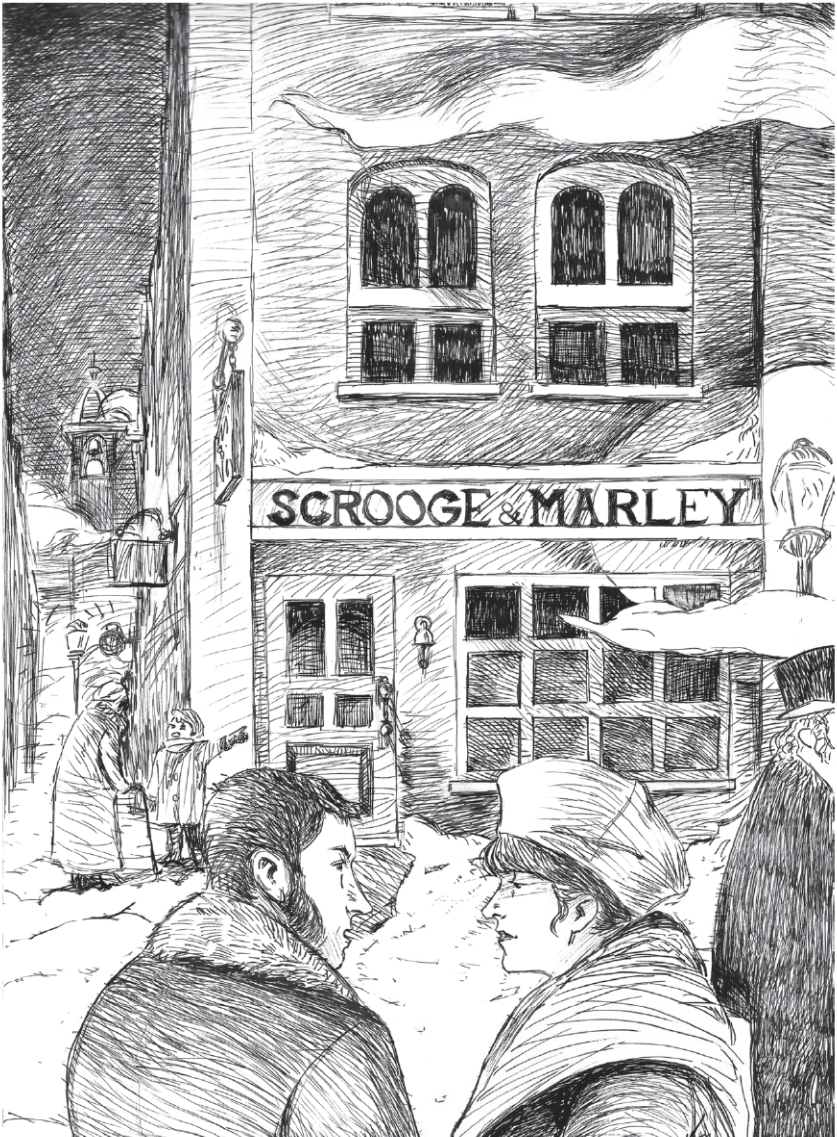
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CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - The Ghost of Jacob Marley	4
Activities	15
Chapter 2 - The Spirit of Christmas Past	18
Activities	25
Chapter 3 - The Spirit of Christmas Present	27
Activities	34
Chapter 4 - The Spirit of Christmas Future	36
Activities	43
Chapter 5 - Scrooge – A New Man!	45
Activities	50
Glossary	52
About the Author	56

A Christmas Carol



His business partner Jacob Marley is dead, but the name 'Scrooge and Marley' is still on the door of the counting house.

THE GHOST OF JACOB MARLEY

It is a cold, **foggy** Christmas Eve in London. The church clock strikes three in the afternoon, but the sky is quite dark. There are **flickering** candles in the windows of all the offices and shops. Ebenezer Scrooge is working in his office. He is the owner of the Scrooge and Marley counting house. His business partner Jacob Marley is dead, but the name 'Scrooge and Marley' is still on the door of the counting house, seven years after his **death**.

Old Scrooge is a **heartless, stingy** businessman. He hates Christmas. He is **shivering** now because his room is very cold. There is a very small fire in his fireplace because he doesn't like spending money on coal. His clerk, Bob Cratchit is writing letters in a small room at the other part of the office.

Scrooge doesn't have a door in his office, so he can see Bob Cratchit all the time. There is very little coal in his fireplace. He can't put more coal into it because Scrooge keeps the coal box in his own room. He can't get any coal from it because he is afraid of Scrooge.

Suddenly, the office door opens and a young, **cheerful** man walks in. Bob Cratchit looks up from his desk and smiles at him. This young man is Scrooge's nephew, Fred.

'Merry Christmas, Uncle! Merry Christmas, Bob!' Fred says happily.

A Christmas Carol

'Bah! **Humbug!**' says Scrooge with an angry face.

'Why do you call Christmas humbug, Uncle? Do you really mean it?'

'Of course, I do. Christmas Day is the same as all the other days. People spend a lot of money on Christmas, and they get poorer. No one gets richer, but everyone gets a year older. And why do you feel happy on Christmas? You are a poor man, not rich.'

'Uncle, you are very rich, but you are **miserable** and **grumpy**. Why?'

To this, Scrooge has no answer. He just says, 'Bah, humbug!' But Fred says, 'Christmas is a pleasant time of the year. We open our hearts to others. Families and friends spend time together and have fun. Everyone feels happy on Christmas.'

Bob Cratchit listens to Fred's words about Christmas with a big smile on his face. But Scrooge points his finger at Bob angrily and says, 'Do your work, Bob! And be careful, or you will lose your job!'

'Don't be so angry, Uncle!' says Fred to Scrooge. 'And please come and have Christmas Dinner with me and my wife tomorrow.'

'No, I don't want to come to your house. And I don't like Christmas dinners. Just go now.'

'I am leaving, Uncle. Have a Merry Christmas. And Merry Christmas to you, Bob!' Fred says one more time and walks out the door.

'Have a good afternoon!' says Scrooge angrily.

The Ghost of Jacob Marley



Scrooge points his finger at Bob angrily and says, 'Do your work, Bob! And be careful, or you will lose your job!'

A Christmas Carol

Soon after Fred leaves, two gentlemen enter the office. They are very polite. They take off their hats and stand before Scrooge.

‘Are you Mr Scrooge or Mr Marley?’ one of them asks.

‘Mr Marley is dead. I am Ebenezer Scrooge. What can I do for you?’

‘We are collecting money for the poor and homeless people. We want to buy food and drinks for them and some coal. Poor people need help.’

‘They don’t need help. Those people are lazy. There are many prisons and workhouses. They can live and work in those places. They can have food and keep warm’ answers Scrooge angrily.

After this rude answer, the two men leave. Then, a young boy comes to the door and begins to sing a Christmas carol. Scrooge gets very angry at the boy and immediately scares him away.

It is the end of the day now. Bob Cratchit puts on his hat and **blows off** the candle on his desk. Scrooge says to him, ‘You are not coming to work tomorrow. But on the day after Christmas, you must come very early, and you must work very hard.’

‘Yes, Sir. I promise I will’ says Bob Cratchit and walks out of the office.

After the clerk leaves, Scrooge puts on his **cloak** and hat. He locks the office door and walks home in the cold and foggy night. In the streets, people are in a hurry to go home. They want to be together with their families. They are saying ‘Merry Christmas’ to each other. Some people are singing Christmas carols in groups. Scrooge does not look at anyone, and nobody speaks to him. Everyone knows Scrooge is not a kind man, and he hates Christmas.

The Ghost of Jacob Marley



Some people are singing Christmas carols in groups. Scrooge does not look at anyone, and nobody speaks to him.

A Christmas Carol

Scrooge arrives at his house. It is a very big house with many rooms, but Scrooge lives alone in only one room. The yard is very dark in the thick fog. As he tries to put his key in the lock, he looks at the big **knocker** on the door. He can't believe his eyes! The knocker is changing its shape! Suddenly, it becomes the face of a man! It is a **familiar** face. It is his dead partner Marley's face! Scrooge is in **fear** now. Then the face becomes a knocker again!

'Is this a ghost? Oh, no, no, it can't be!' Scrooge says to himself. He is afraid.



The Ghost of Jacob Marley

He goes inside the house quickly and shuts the heavy door. But before that, he looks behind the door in fear. There is nothing behind the door, so he shuts it with a bang and says, 'Pooh, pooh!' Then he lights a candle and looks around the hall very carefully.

He walks across the hall and goes up the stairs. He quickly looks in all the rooms upstairs, but sees nothing. He goes into his bedroom and locks its door twice. He makes a small fire in the fireplace. Then he puts on his **dressing gown**, slippers and his **nightcap**. He puts a pot of soup on the fire and sits in front of it.

While he is eating his soup, he sees strange shapes in the room. They are all like Jacob Marley's face! Suddenly, a bell starts to ring. Then Scrooge hears many bells ringing. He is very **frightened**, but he says, 'Humbug! There can't be any ghosts.'

Suddenly, all the bells stop ringing. This time, Scrooge hears some noises. They are coming from the **cellar** downstairs. They are the sounds of **chains** hitting the floor. Scrooge thinks someone is pulling chains across the floor.

'Is there someone in the cellar? Maybe it is a ghost. Ghosts usually walk in chains around their body.'

Now Scrooge is more frightened than before. The noise gets louder and louder. It is moving up the stairs toward his room. Suddenly the door opens and a ghost enters the room. It is a ghost in Jacob Marley's white **waistcoat** and boots, and has a **pigtail**, just like Marley.

A Christmas Carol

There are chains around his body and legs. A lot of cash-boxes, keys, **padlocks** and heavy purses are hanging from the chains. They are very heavy because they are made of steel. The ghost looks very tired and in great **pain**. Scrooge is shocked!

‘Who are you?’ shouts Scrooge at the ghost.

‘I am your partner and best friend. Don’t you know me?’

‘Jacob, you are dead! Why are you here?’

‘I want to help you. I often come and visit you in the office. You never see me because I am **invisible**, and no one can see me.’

‘I see you now. You look **miserable** and very tired. And why do you have those things and chains around your body?’

‘This is my **punishment**. It is a punishment for my **greedy** life on Earth. I am dead, but I must travel around as a ghost in chains.’

‘But what are you doing in my house? You are frightening me.’

‘I want to help you, Ebenezer. I don’t want you to have pain after you die.’

The Ghost of Jacob Marley



'I want to help you. I often come and visit you in the office. You never see me because I am invisible, and no one can see me.'

‘What do you mean? Will I be a ghost and travel in chains like you?’

‘I don’t know, Ebenezer. I don’t know. But you have a **chance**.’

‘A chance for what?’ asks Scrooge. ‘Please tell me more.’

‘You can change and become a kind man. Then your future will change, too. Three spirits will come and visit you over the next three nights. Two of them will come at one o’clock, and the last one will come at midnight.’

‘Why? I don’t want to see any more ghosts.’

‘Listen to those spirits and go with them. Your future can change with their help.’

‘I don’t understand anything. And I am very scared.’

‘I must go now, Ebenezer. I don’t have time. The other ghosts are waiting for me. We must continue travelling around the Earth.’

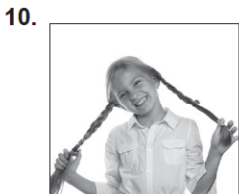
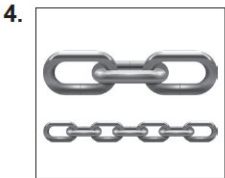
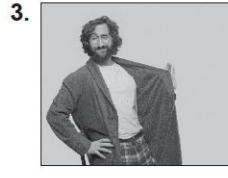
‘Oh, wait, wait! Tell me more!’

But the ghost **disappears** through the closed window. Scrooge is shocked. He opens the window and looks out. There are many ghosts in the foggy sky. They are all in chains, and they all look miserable, like Marley’s ghost. Scrooge can hear their **moans** and cries. Then they disappear in the fog, and the night becomes quiet.

Now Scrooge hears only the wind blowing. He is still very frightened. He closes the window quickly and checks the door. It is still **locked**. He is very tired and sleepy. So, he lies down on his bed. He tries to stay **awake**, but goes to sleep immediately.

ACTIVITIES

A. Match the pictures (1-10) with the words (a-j).

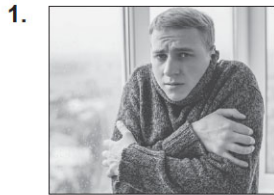


- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------|
| a. cellar | b. chains | c. cloak |
| d. coal | e. dressing gown | f. ghost |
| g. knocker | h. nightcap | i. pigtail |
| j. waistcoat | | |

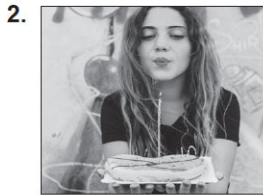
A Christmas Carol

B. Put these words in the correct sentences.

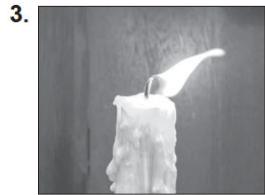
grumpy pain blowing shivering miserable
awake flickering shivering frightened



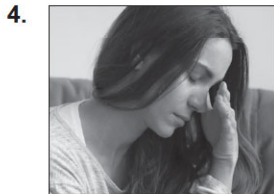
He is _____.



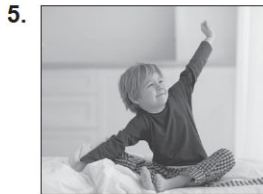
She is _____
off the candle



The candle is
_____.



She is feeling
_____.



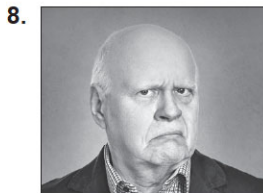
He is not sleeping.
He is _____.



She is _____.



He is in
_____.



He is a
_____ man.

C. Write their names.

1. Scrooge's counting house: _____
2. Scrooge's clerk: _____
3. Scrooge's nephew: _____
4. Scrooge's old partner: _____

D. Mark the sentences T (True) or F (false).

1. Scrooge is an unkind man, and he hates spending money. _____
2. Scrooge and Bob Cratchit live in the same house. _____
3. Scrooge likes singing and listening to Christmas carols. _____
4. Fred is a married man. _____
5. Fred invites Scrooge and Bob Cratchit to Christmas dinner. _____
6. Scrooge is not scared of ghosts. _____
7. Scrooge often sees Jacob Marley's ghost in his office. _____
8. Scrooge hears Jacob Marley's moans. _____
9. Jacob Marley has a punishment for being an unkind man in his lifetime.

10. Marley's ghost stays in Scrooge's bedroom all night long. _____

GLOSSARY

Chapter 1 - The Ghost of Jacob Marley

awake (adj) not sleeping

cellar (n) a room under a house that is used for storing things

chain (n) metal rings that are connected together and used for fastening things
chain (v)

chance (n) the possibility that something can happen; opportunity

cheerful (adj) happy

cloak (n) an outdoor cloth that falls loosely from the shoulders

death (n) the end of the life of a person, an animal or any other living thing
dead (adj)

disappear (v) to become impossible to see; to become invisible
disappearance (n)

dressing gown (n) a long clothing that is generally worn after getting out of bed

familiar (adj) well-known and easily recognized

fear (n) a feeling of danger
fear (v)

flickering (adj) burning unsteadily
flicker (v)

foggy (adj) when the weather is foggy, it is difficult to see through the cloudy air near the ground; full of fog
fog (n)

frightened (adj) feeling afraid or showing fear

greedy (adj) wanting more food, money, power etc. than you need

grumpy (adj) unhappy and dissatisfied for no obvious reason

heartless (adj) feeling or showing no kindness; cruel; unkind

humbug (n) nonsense

invisible (adj) cannot be seen because it is very small, hidden or transparent

knocker (n) a metal object attached to an outside door and used for hitting the door

locked (adj) fastened with a key and cannot be opened
lock (n/v)

miserable (adj) very unhappy
misery (n)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was a British writer, journalist and social critic who is regarded as one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian era. Dickens was the second of eight children to John and Elizabeth Dickens. When Dickens was 12 years old, his father was imprisoned for debt, and Dickens had to work in a shoe polish factory to support his family. This experience influenced Dickens deeply, and it became a source of inspiration especially for his novels *Little Dorrit*, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*.

Dickens began his literary career as a journalist. At the age of 15, he started to work as a clerk at a law office, then became a reporter first in the courts, and then in a newspaper. In 1833, Dickens began to write short stories to newspapers by using the nickname Boz. The collection of these stories titled *Sketches by Boz* (1836) was Dickens' first published book. It was followed by his first novel *The Pickwick Papers*, published in the same year and made a huge success. A month after the publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of his editor in the *Evening Chronicle*, and they had ten children.

After the success of *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens started a full-time career as a writer, and he published fifteen novels in his lifetime. All of his novels were published first as weekly or monthly serials before being printed as books. *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) are among his most notable novels. His last work *Edwin Drood* was not completed yet when Dickens died of a heart stroke in 1870. Dickens is still one of the best known and most read British authors.

Sources

<http://www.dickens-online.info/charles-dickens-biography.htm>

<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dickensbio1.html>