

DICKENS CHARLES

A CHRISTMAS CAROL;
OR, THE MISER'S
WARNING!

Charles Dickens
A Christmas Carol; Or,
The Miser's Warning!

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A Christmas Carol; Or, The Miser's Warning! / (Adapted from Charles
Dickens' Celebrated Work.):*

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Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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C. Z. Barnett, Charles Dickens
A Christmas Carol; Or,
The Miser's Warning! /
(Adapted from Charles
Dickens' Celebrated Work.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Ebenezer Scrooge, the Miser	Mr. R. Horner
Frank Freeheart, his Nephew	Mr. J. T. Johnson
Mr. Cheerly	Mr. Hawkins
Mr. Heartly	Mr. Green
Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's Clerk	Mr. Vale
Dark Sam	Mr. Stilt
CHARACTERS IN THE DREAM.	
Euston, a ruined Gentleman	Mr. Lawler
Mr. Fezzivig	Mr. Dixie
Old Joe, a Fence	Mr. Goldsmith
Ghost of Jacob Marley	Mr. Morrison
Ghost of Christmas Past	Mr. Lewis
Ghost of Christmas Present	Mr. Heslop
Ghost of Christmas to Come	* * *
Dark Sam	Mr. Stilt
Peter, Bob's Eldest Son	Miss Daly
Tiny Tim	Master Brady
Mrs. Freeheart	Mrs. Hicks
Ellen, Scrooge's former love	Mrs. H. Hughes
Mrs. Cratchit	Mrs. Daly

First produced at the Royal Surrey Theatre, Feb. 5th, 1844.

COSTUME.

Scrooge – Brown old-fashioned coat, tea colour breeches, double-breasted white waistcoat. 2nd. – Dressing gown and slippers.

Frank – Private dress.

Mr. Cheerly – Blue coat, cord breeches, and gaiters.

Mr. Heartly – Green coat, black breeches, top boots.

Bob Cratchit – Black old-fashioned coat, black trousers.

Dark Sam – Dark green shooting coat and breeches, ragged.

Second dress – Shabby black coat.

Euston – Shabby private clothes.

Mr. Fezziwig – Black coat, black breeches, double-breasted waistcoat, and striped stockings.

Marley's Ghost – Slate coloured coat, waistcoat, and pantaloons, black boots, white frill, white band.

Christmas Past – White dress trimmed with summer flowers, rich belt, fleshings and sandals.

Christmas Present – Long green robe, trimmed with ermine, flesh body and legs, wreath round head.

Christmas to Come – Very long black gown.

Tiny Tim – Blue jacket and trousers.

All the Ladies – Modern dresses.

ACT I

SCENE I.—Chambers of Scrooge, the Miser. One side of it is filled up with a desk and high stool, the other is a fireplace, fire lighted. Easy chair, table with candlestick upon it, etc., etc

Scrooge, the Miser, discovered near fire. Bob Cratchit, writing near desk, l. h. As the Curtain rises he descends from stool – approaches fire to stir it.

Scrooge. Bob – Bob, we shall be obliged to part. You'll ruin me in coals!

Bob. Ruin you – with such a fire in such weather! I've been trying to warm myself by the candle for the last half hour, but not being a man of strong imagination, failed.

Scr. Hark! I think I hear some one in the office. Go – see who it is.

Bob. (*Aside.*) Marley's dead – his late partner is dead as a door nail! If he was to follow him, it wouldn't matter much. (*Exit 2 e. l. h.*)

Scr. Marley has been dead seven years, and has left me his sole executor – his sole administrator – his sole residuary legatee – his sole friend – his sole mourner! My poor old partner! I was sorely

grieved at his death, and shall never forget his funeral. Coming from it, I made one of the best bargains I ever made. Ha, ha. Folks say I'm tight-fisted – that I'm a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, clutching miser. What of that? It saves me from being annoyed by needy men and beggars. So, this is Christmas eve – and cold, bleak, biting weather it is, and folks are preparing to be merry. Bah! what's Christmas eve to me? what should it be to them?

Enter Frank and Bob, 2 e. 1. h

Bob. There's your uncle, sir. (*Aside.*) Old covetous! He's worse than the rain and snow. They often come down, and handsomely too, but Scrooge never does! (*Exit 2 e. 1. h.*

Scr. Who's that?

Frank. A merry Christmas, uncle!

Scr. Bah! humbug!

Frank. Uncle, you don't mean that, I'm sure.

Scr. I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

Frank. (*Gaily.*) Come, then, what right have you to be dismal! What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

Scr. Bah! humbug!

Frank. Don't be cross, uncle.

Scr. What else can I be, when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas. What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money

– a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with merry Christmas on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart – he should!

Frank. Uncle!

Scr. Nephew, keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

Frank. Keep it! But you don't keep it.

Scr. Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you. Much good it has ever done you.

Frank. There are many things from which I might have derived good by which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among the rest, but I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time – a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys, and, therefore, uncle, though it has not put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good, and I say, Heaven bless it!

Bob. (*Looking in.*) Beautiful – beautiful!

Scr. Let me hear another sound from you – (*To Bob.*) – And you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation.

Bob. (*Aside.*) He growls like a bear with a sore head!

(Disappears.)

Scr. You're quite a powerful speaker. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

Frank. Don't be angry. Come – dine with me to-morrow.

Scr. No, no —

Frank. But why not?

Scr. Why did you get married?

Frank. Because I fell in love.

Scr. Because you fell in love! Bah! good evening.

Frank. I want nothing – I ask nothing of you. Well, I'm sorry to find you so resolute – we have never had any quarrel – I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last – so, a merry Christmas, uncle.

Scr. Good evening!

Frank. And a happy new year!

Scr. Good evening!

Enter Bob, 2 e. 1. h

Frank. And a happy Christmas, and a merry new year to you, Bob Cratchit. *(Shaking him by the hand.)*

Bob. The same to you, sir, and many of 'em, and to your wife, and to your darling children, and to all your friends, and to all you know, and to every one, to all the world. *(Exit Frank, 2 e. 1. h.)*

Scr. *(Aside.)* There's another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry

Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

Bob. Two gentlemen want you, sir, as fat as prize beef – shall I call 'em in? (*Goes to side.*) Walk this way if you please, gentlemen.

***Enter Mr. Cheerly and Mr. Heartly,
2 e. l. h., with books and papers***

Cheer. Scrooge and Marley's – I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Marley!

Scr. Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years.

Cheer. At this festive season of the year, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute – many thousands are in want of common necessaries – hundreds of thousands are in want of common comfort, sir.

Scr. Are there no prisons? and the union workhouses, are they still in operation?

Cheer. They are still – I wish I could say they were not.

Scr. The treadmill and the poor law are in full vigour then?

Cheer. Both very busy, sir.

Scr. Oh! I was afraid from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I'm very glad to hear it!

Cheer. Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us

are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is a time of all others, when want is keenly felt and abundances rejoice. What shall we put you down for?

Scr. Nothing!

Cheer. You wish to be anonymous?

Scr. I wish to be left alone. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry – I help to support the establishments I have named – they cost enough – those who are badly off must go there.

Cheer. Many can't go there – many would rather die!

Scr. If they'd rather die, they'd better do it, and decrease the surplus population. However, it's not my business, so good evening, gentlemen.

Cheer. I am sorry we disturbed you. (*As they are about to exeunt, Bob approaches them —Scrooge retires up.*)

Bob. Beg pardon, gentlemen, I've got an odd eighteen-pence here that I was going to buy a new pair of gloves with in honour of Christmas day, but my heart would feel warmer though my hands were colder, if it helped to put a dinner and a garment on a poor creature who might need. There take it.

Cheer. Such acts as these from such men as you sooner or later, will be well rewarded.

Bob. This way, gentlemen. I feel as light as my four-and-ninepenny gossamer! (*Exeunt 2 e. l. h.*)

Scr. (*Coming down.*) Give money – humbug! Who'd give me

anything, I should like to know?

Re-enter Bob, 2 e. l. h

Bob. A letter, sir. (*Gives it and retires up.*)

Scr. (*Opens it – reads.*) Ah! what do I see? the Mary Jane lost off the coast of Africa. Then Frank is utterly ruined! his all was embarked on board that vessel. Frank knows not of this – he will apply to me doubtless – but no, no. Why should I part with my hard gained store to assist him, his wife and children – he chooses to make a fool of himself, and marry a smooth-faced chit, and get a family – he must bear the consequences – I will not avert his ruin, no, not by a single penny.

Bob. (*Coming down.*) Please, sir, it's nine o'clock.

Scr. Already! You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose.

Bob. If quite convenient, sir.

Scr. It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound, and yet you don't think me ill used when I pay a day's wages for no work.

Bob. Christmas comes but once a year.

Scr. A poor excuse for picking a man's pockets every twenty-fifth of December! Well, I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning. Here's your week's money, fifteen shillings – I ought to stop half-a-crown – never mind!

Bob. Thank you, sir! I'll be here before daylight, sir, you may depend upon it. Good night, sir. Oh, what a glorious dinner Mrs.

C. shall provide. Good night, sir. A merry Christmas and a happy new year, sir.

Scr. Bah! humbug! (*Exit Bob, 2 e. l. h.*) So – alone once more. It's a rough night! I will go to bed soon – that will save supper. (*Takes off his coat, boots, etc., and puts on morning gown and slippers, talking all the time.*) 'Tis strange now the idea of Marley is haunting me to-night – everywhere I turn his face seems before me. Delusion – humbug! I'll sit down by the fire and forget him. (*Takes basin of gruel from hob.*) Here's my gruel! (*Sits in easy chair by fire – puts on night cap, and presently appears to dose. Suddenly a clanking of chains and ringing of bells is heard – he's aroused, and looks up terrified.*) That noise! It's humbug! I won't believe it! (*The door slowly opens, and the Ghost of Marley glides in. A chain is round his body, and cash boxes, ledgers, padlocks, purses, etc., are attached to it.*) How now! What do you want with me?

Ghost. Much.

Scr. Who are you?

Ghost. Ask me who I was.

Scr. Who were you, then. You're particular for a shade – I mean to a shade.

Ghost. In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley. You don't believe in me! Why do you doubt your senses?

Scr. Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef – a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of

gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are.

Ghost. (*Unfastening the bandage round its head.*) Man of the worldly mind, do you believe me or not?

Scr. I do – I must! But why do spirits walk the earth? Why do they come to me?

Ghost. It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men, and travel far and wide – if not in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world, oh, woe is me! – and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness.

Scr. You are fettered!

Ghost. I wear the chain I forged in life – I made it link by link. Is its pattern strange to you? Oh, no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused.

Scr. But you were always a man of business —

Ghost. Business! Mankind was my business – charity, mercy, were all my business. At this time of the year I suffered most, for I neglected most. Hear me! I am here to-night to warn you that you have a chance and a hope of escaping my fate. You will be haunted by three spirits —

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