

A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens

Chapter One - Marley's Ghost

Old Marley was dead as a doornail. There was absolutely no doubt about it. Scrooge knew it. Everyone knew it. And absolutely no one missed him, least of all Scrooge. Jacob Marley had been Scrooge's business partner. He was almost as mean, miserly and selfish as Ebenezer Scrooge.

Ebenezer Scrooge was so mean that nobody wanted to speak to him. Even the beggars on the street were afraid to ask him for change. But Scrooge didn't care.

The time of year that Scrooge hated the most was Christmas. If anyone was foolish enough to say "Merry Christmas," Scrooge would reply, "Bah! Humbug!"

Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's poor hard-working clerk invited Scrooge for Christmas dinner to meet his family, and his favorite son, Tiny Tim.

"Bah, Humbug!" Scrooge said. "Be at work bright and early Christmas morning, Cratchit! Or you're fired!"

That night, while Scrooge was asleep, he heard a strange noise. A clanking, rattling noise. Scrooge sat up and saw....Jacob Marley's ghost.



"What are you doing here?" Scrooge asked.

"Learn from my mistakes, Ebenezer. I've come to tell you to change your ways, before it is too late," Marley's ghost said.

"Nonsense!" said Scrooge.

"You will be visited by three spirits this night. They will show you what you need to see; tell you what you need to hear; take you where you need to go, so that you understand and change."

"I'd rather not," Scrooge told him.

"You have no choice," Marley said. "Unless you want to end up in chains like me, without a friendly place to rest your weary head. They will come for you tomorrow. When you hear the bell toll, it tolls for thee."

And with that, Marley was gone!

Chapter Four The Last of the Spirits

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come approached Scrooge slowly, gravely, in silence. It was covered in a deep black robe. Scrooge could not see its head or its face, only its outstretched hand. The ghost's very presence filled him with dread.

"What do you want of me?" Scrooge asked.

But the ghost would not answer. It simply pointed its hand.

Scrooge was afraid to follow and covered his eyes. The ghost began to move, and by some magical force, Scrooge did, too. When Scrooge opened his eyes, he was in a churchyard. There he saw a neglected tombstone. No one came to visit. No one laid flowers at its head.

"Who is buried in that lonely gravestone?" Scrooge asked.

The ghost said nothing. It simply pointed to the stone.

Trembling, Scrooge moved closer to the stone. There he saw the name of unloved man: EBENEZER SCROOGE.

"Tell me what I may do? How can I change my lonely fate?" Scrooge asked the ghost.

The ghost said nothing. He pointed to the stone again.

"If I honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep its

spirit all year long; if I learn the lessons from past, present and future - will I change my fate?" Scrooge begged. "Tell me, spirit. What can I do?"

Instead of an answer, the ghost shriveled and shrunk, until there was nothing left of it at all.



The Last of the Spirits