



PLOT SYNOPSIS (WHAT IS THE STORY ABOUT?)

A Christmas Carol is a story about a mean-spirited and selfish old man, Ebenezer Scrooge, who hates Christmas.

One Christmas Eve night, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his old business partner Jacob Marley – and then by three ghosts! They are the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future.

The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge on a journey through Christmases from his past, taking Scrooge to see himself as an unhappy child and a young man more in love with money than his fiancé.

The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge his clerk, Bob Cratchit's, family. At Bob Cratchit's house Scrooge sees Tiny Tim, who is very ill, but full of spirit. The ghost then takes him to see his nephew Fred's Christmas celebrations - which he had been invited to, but turned down.

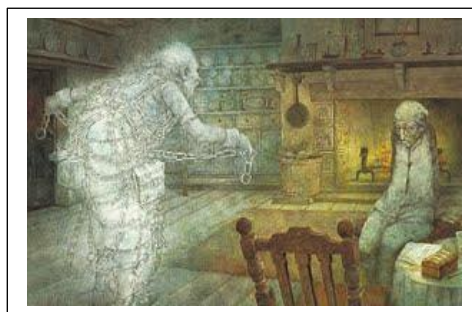
Finally, The Ghost of Christmas Future terrifies Scrooge by showing him visions of his own death...

The ghosts' journey through time teaches Scrooge the error of his ways. When he wakes up on Christmas Day he is full of excitement, and buys the biggest turkey in the shop for the Cratchit family before spending the day with his



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens



KEY QUOTATIONS:

EBENEZER SCROOGE:

- '...as hard and sharp as flint.'
- 'Are there no prisons? Are there no workhouses?'
- '...a solitary boy neglected by his friends.'
- 'Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.'

JACOB MARLEY:

- "I wear the chain I forged in life...I made it link by link, yard by yard, and of my own free will I wore it."

BOB CRATCHIT:

- 'The clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like only one coal.'
- "I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!"

THE GHOSTS:

- '...like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man.' (*Christmas Past*)
- '...free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air.'
- "This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom." (*Christmas Present*)
- 'When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.' (*Christmas Yet to Come*)

FRED :

- "I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him."



LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

Satire- use of humour or ridicule to criticise

Simile- comparing using 'like' or 'as'

Metaphor- saying one thing is another

Personification- make object human

Pathos- language to evoke pity

Hyperbole- exaggerated statement

Characterisation- built up description of character in text

Imagery- visually descriptive language

Conflict- problem faced by characters

Resolution- point where conflict is resolved

Foreshadowing- clue about something later

Juxtaposition- two contrasted ideas

Backstory- insight into character's past

Exposition- revelation of something

Poetic justice- good rewarded bad punished

Melodrama- exaggerated characters/events



IGNORANCE AND WANT

KEY THEMES AND IDEAS

Poverty, Fate, Charity, Transformation, Capitalism, Greed, Money, Redemption, Family, Friendship, Religion, Morality, Isolation/Loneliness, Choices, Memory and the past, Compassion, Forgiveness, Guilt and blame, Time, Rationality

CONTEXT

Charles Dickens was writing in the Victorian era (the 19th Century). Queen Victoria was on the throne and Britain was going through the Industrial Revolution – a time when many factories and other industries grew up. People moved to cities in large numbers looking for work, and many of them lived in very poor conditions while the factory and business owners (capitalists) got very rich.

Charles Dickens himself was put to work in a factory from the age of 9 for three years, when his father was sent to prison for owing money he could not repay. There were fewer laws to protect children and they often had to work in factories or workhouses to help support their families. The experience left its mark on him and, as an adult, he used his writing to campaign for better conditions for poor and vulnerable people, especially children.

Dickens' intention in A Christmas Carol is to draw readers' attention to the plight of the poor and to highlight the hypocrisy of Victorian society. He juxtaposes the wealth and greed of capitalists with the poorer classes and draws attention to the way in which the greed and selfishness of some impacts on the quality of the lives of others. His moral message appears to be that we should care for our fellow man. The transformation of Scrooge suggests that Dickens feels it is never too late for change and redemption. Dickens emphasises the importance of family, friendship and charity in bringing about this change.