

A Christmas Carol - Charles Dickens [Penguin Popular Classics]

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✓ Verified Book of A Christmas Carol - Charles Dickens [Penguin Popular Classics]

Summary:

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"A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, biting, clutching, covetous old sinner" is hardly hero material, but this is exactly what makes A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens such an unforgettable book and its hero, Ebenezer Scrooge such an extraordinarily enduring character.

In the book's celebrated opening scene, on the night before Christmas the old miser Ebenezer Scrooge sits in his freezing cold counting house, oblivious to the discomfort of his shivering young assistant Bob Cratchit. Scrooge is unremittently rude to relatives and visitors alike who drop in to convey their Christmas greetings or ask for a contribution to charity. Scrooge returns to his equally chilly mansion where he has an extraordinary supernatural experience. The spirit of his dead partner, Marley appears recounting tales of eternal suffering that he is condemned to endure because of the mean and uncharitable deeds that Marley did when he was alive. Marley informs Scrooge that three other supernatural visitors will make their appearance over the next three nights. The rest of the book traces the events that happen when these three otherworldly beings visit Scrooge.

The book has five chapters, which the writer called "staves" referring to musical notation in which five horizontal lines and four spaces represent musical pitch. Published in 1843, the book went on to receive immense appreciation for its deeply emotional quality, touching scenes, wonderful characterization and Dickens himself felt the book's central ideas of charity, kindness, compassion, love and generosity were what set it apart from contemporary fiction of the time. It also took the theatrical world by storm and three productions went on stage simultaneously in 1844 with Dickens' blessings. Since then it has been extensively adapted for film, radio and television and took on the proportions of a Christmas tradition even during Dickens' lifetime itself. Endless spinoffs in literature, drama and popular literature keep this tale alive even today. Walt Disney's Unca Scrooge is inspired by it and today, the word "Scrooge" has become synonymous with miserliness. A Christmas Carol's enduring appeal lies in its heart rending appeal to help those living in impoverished conditions. The highly sentimental and touching pictures of Christmas celebrated in homes where festivities cannot coexist with grinding poverty, told in typical Dickensian style, make it both a literary masterpiece and a plea for social reform. But all is not gloom and doom "there are brilliant flashes of humor, memorable characterization and a deep understanding of human nature. As with all Dickens' works, this one too is peculiarly suited to being read aloud, especially when the family gathers round a cozy fire on Christmas Eve!

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