

Contents

Introduction	4
Key events in <i>A Christmas Carol</i>	6
Stave One:	
Marley's Ghost	7
Stave Two:	
The First of the Three Spirits	25
Stave Three:	
The Second of the Three Spirits	42
Stave Four:	
The Last of the Spirits	64
Stave Five:	
The End of it	79
Quotations	86
Glossary	102



Key events



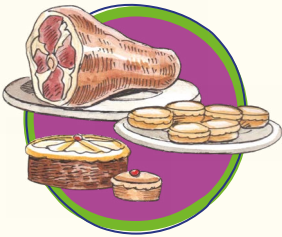
Stave One

Christmas Eve. Scrooge is in his counting house watching his clerk, Bob Cratchit. Fred, Scrooge's nephew, arrives bringing warmth into the gloom. Fred invites Scrooge to Christmas dinner, Scrooge refuses. Fred leaves and charity collectors arrive. Scrooge refuses to give money. As Scrooge arrives home, the door knocker changes into the face of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley. Marley's ghost appears, warning Scrooge that he will suffer torment unless he changes and that he will be visited by three spirits over the next three nights.



Stave Two

The Ghost of Christmas Past appears. It takes him to Christmas scenes during Scrooge's past: lonely at school with his sister collecting him; a work celebration with Fezziwig; and Belle breaking off their engagement. Scrooge tries to shut down the Ghost's light but fails. We begin to see why he has become a bitter man.



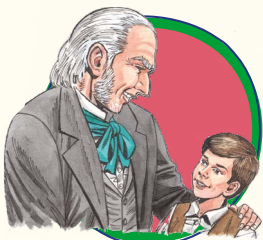
Stave Three

The Ghost of Christmas Present appears. Scrooge is shown a series of people preparing for Christmas festivities. The Ghost 'sprinkled incense' (Christmas spirit) on the neediest. The Ghost leads Scrooge to the Cratchit family's house, he sees Tiny Tim. We are shown a series of people preparing for Christmas: families, miners, sailors and Fred. Two children, Ignorance and Want, appear from the Ghost's robes. The Ghost disappears, being replaced by a hooded phantom.



Stave Four

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come takes Scrooge to a street where businessmen are discussing the death and funeral of a businessman. Scrooge is taken to a shop where a laundress, an undertaker and a charwoman are selling a dead man's belongings. Wanting to see 'emotion' at a death, Scrooge is shown people happy because their creditor is dead. Wanting to see 'tenderness' at a death, Scrooge is taken to the Cratchit house, where they are grieving Tiny Tim's death. Questioning the identity of the dead man, Scrooge is shown a gravestone bearing his name. Scrooge pledges to 'honour' Christmas in his heart.



Stave Five

Christmas Day, Scrooge wakes in his bed. Joyful, he sets out to right his past behaviour. He gets a turkey delivered to the Cratchits' house, apologises and gives money to the charity collectors and goes to Fred's house to join the party. On Boxing Day, he goes to his office, giving Bob Cratchit a raise and pledging to help his family. Tiny Tim does not die, and Scrooge becomes like a second father to him. Tiny Tim's words end the novella.

① **Character** ✕ **Language**: The narrator instructs us how to view Scrooge - unsympathetically. Hard consonants: 'sq', 'wr', 'gr' suggest his harsh nature. The simile 'solitary as an oyster' emphasises his isolation and hard shell. Interestingly, oysters can contain pearls.

② **Character** ✕ **Language**: Semantic field of cold images revealing Scrooge's nature.

③ **Character** ✕ **Language**: Weather imagery used to reflect Scrooge's emotionless icy core.

④ **Character, Structure** ✕ **Theme (redemption and family)**: Scrooge's isolation is reinforced by sentence structure of the repeated 'no'.

⑤ **Character** ✕ **Theme (redemption)**: Scrooge's isolation. He embraces it.

years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, **covetous** old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. ① The cold ② within him froze ② his old features, nipped ② his pointed nose, shrivelled ② his cheek, stiffened ② his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue ②; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty ② rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature ② always about with him; he iced ② his office in the **dog-days**; and didn't thaw ② it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him. ③ No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, ④ "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No ④ beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no ④ children asked him what it was o'clock, no ④ man or woman ever once in all his life enquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and, when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No ④ eye at all is better than an **evil eye**, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. ⑤ To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time - of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve - old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

covetous - jealous of other people's possessions

dog-days - hottest period of the year/often meaning decline

evil eye - a stare believed to cause harm

Key quotations



These key quotations will provide you with evidence to support your insights into character, themes, language and meaning. They are referenced by a 'key' symbol in this text. It would be helpful to learn them as part of your revision.

“Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.”

Stave One, page 8 ① narrator

“External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, nor wintry weather chill him.”

Stave One, page 8 ③ narrator

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.”

Stave One, page 13 ③ Scrooge



“Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence were, all, my business.”

Stave One, page 22 ④ Jacob Marley



“This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both...but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased.”

Stave Three, page 63 ① ② Ghost of Christmas Past



“Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and, following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.”

Stave Four, page 77 ④ narrator

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone.”

Stave Four, page 78 ② Scrooge



“I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!”

Stave Five, page 79 ⑤ Scrooge



“Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did *not* die, he was a second father.”

Stave Five, page 84 ③ ④ narrator

“And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, every one!”

Stave Five, page 85 ③ narrator

Theme quotations

Themes signal central ideas within a text. The pages that follow provide some of the most significant quotations for key themes within the novella.

Social responsibility

“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.”

Stave One, page 10 ④ Fred

“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, who suffer greatly at the present time.”

Stave One, page 12 ② Charity collector

“Are there no prisons?”...“And the union workhouses?”...“Are they still in operation?”...“The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?”

Stave One, page 12 ③ ④ ⑤ Scrooge

“I wear the chain I forged in life,” replied the Ghost. “I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.”

Stave One, pages 21 ① Marley's Ghost

“Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

Stave One, page 22 ④ Marley's Ghost

“Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives.”

Stave One, page 24 ① narrator

“He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil.”

Stave Two, page 36 ④ Scrooge talking about Fezziwig

“There are some upon this earth of yours,” returned the Spirit, “Who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill will, hatred, envy, bigotry and selfishness in our name...”

Stave Three, page 48 ① The Ghost of Christmas Present

“From the foldings of its robe it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable.”

Stave Three, page 62 ② narrator



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"A merry Christmas, Uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "**Humbug!**"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

Tricky words highlighted and defined on the page.

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