



# Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL  
ADAPTED FROM CHAS. DICKENS

1.

ONE Christmas Eve Scrooge, an old man, still sat busy in his office. The weather was cold, and he could hear the people in the street outside beating their hands upon their breasts and stamping their feet upon the pavement to keep warm.

"A merry Christmas, Uncle!" cried a cheerful voice. It was Scrooge's nephew.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"

"Christmas a humbug, Uncle?" cried his nephew; "you do not mean that, I am sure."

"I do," said Scrooge. "What right have you to be merry? You are poor!"

"Come, then," returned his nephew, "what right have you to be so dismal? You are rich."

"Bah! Humbug!" Scrooge returned.

"Do not be so cross," said his nephew



2.

"WHAT else can I be," said Scrooge, "when I live in such a world of fools!"

"Well, Uncle, Christmas has never done much for me, but it makes me happy to keep it, and I say again, a merry Christmas to you, Uncle."

The clerk in the office said: "Same here!"

"Let me hear another sound from you," said Scrooge, "and you will keep your Christmas by losing your job."

"Well, good-bye and merry Christmas, Uncle, and a happy New Year," said his nephew, and left the room.

"My clerk makes fifteen dollars a week, and has a wife and children, and he is thinking about merry Christmas. Well, I will give nothing to any one. I wish to be left alone," muttered Scrooge.



3.

SCROOGE called his clerk and told him it was time to shut up the office, and with a growl he walked out.

It was dark and cold when Scrooge got to his home, but he did not care; darkness is cheap. He closed his door, locked himself in, and sat down before the fire to eat his mush. It was a very low fire for such a cold night, so he sat very close to it. Scrooge spent little money on coal and light; in fact, he was a miserable miser.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge. He took several turns around the room and then sat down again, resting his head back in his chair. His glance rested upon the bell that hung in the room. By and by this bell began to ring, at first softly, and then very loudly, and so did all the bells in the house. Sounds like the rattling of many chains reached his ears from the cellar door, which just then flew open. Scrooge fell upon his knees in fear and trembling and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy!" he cried, fearing some terrible thing was to happen.



4.

"I AM the Ghost of Christmas Present," said a voice, and Scrooge looked and saw a figure all clothed in a simple green robe trimmed with white fur.

"Touch my robe," said the ghost, and Scrooge did as he was told. His room, the fire, everything vanished instantly, and he found himself in the city streets on Christmas morning. The people were scraping snow from the pavements, but on they went until they came to the four-roomed house of Scrooge's clerk, Bob Cratchet. The Ghost of Christmas Present and Scrooge were invisible, but they could see everything. There was Mrs. Cratchet, all dressed up in her best, laying the table, helped by Belinda, her daughter, while Peter plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes. Two smaller Cratchets, boy and girl, came running in, calling out that they smelt roast geese, and all the small Cratchets danced about the table.



5.

"WHERE is your father and your brother, Tiny Tim, and where is Martha?" said Mrs. Cratchet.

"Here is Martha, mother," said one of the girls.

"Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha," they all called.

"Here comes father."

In came Bob Cratchet with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas, for Tiny Tim! He was lame and could not walk. And now such a bustle began you might have thought that a roast goose was the rarest bird in the world. Mrs. Cratchet made the gravy, Peter mashed the potatoes, Belinda sweetened the apple sauce, and Martha wiped the hot plates.

Tiny Tim sat beside Bob at one corner of the table, and the younger Cratchets put chairs up for everybody. Tiny Tim beat the table with the handle of his knife and cried "Hurrah!" And Bob said he did not believe there ever was such a goose cooked.



6.

THEN came the pudding which looked like a speckled cannonball blazing from the lighted alcohol, and decked with Christmas holly stuck in the top.

"O wonderful pudding," Bob Cratchet called. "A merry Christmas to us all, my dears, and God bless us." "God bless every one," said Tiny Tim.

Then they had chestnuts, apples, cake and candy, and by and by they had a song, and they were all happy.

By this time it was getting dark and snowing heavily. The spirit took Scrooge along the street, and the brightness in all the houses was wonderful.

"Spirit," cried Scrooge, "I am not the man I was. Hear me! I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it."

Holding up his hands in one last prayer he saw the spirit's hood and dress, shrink and dwindle away, and he found himself in his own bed and in his own room.



7.

"I DON'T know what to do," cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath. "I am as happy as a schoolboy. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hello here! Whoop! Hello!"

Running to the window he opened it and put out his head.

"What day it is, my fine fellow!" he called to a boy.

"Today! Why, Christmas Day!"

"It is Christmas Day," said Scrooge to himself. "I haven't missed it. The spirits have done it in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can."

"Hello, my fine fellow!"

"Hello," returned the boy.

"Do you know the market down the next street?" said Scrooge.

"I should hope I did," replied the boy.

"Go and buy the biggest turkey you can get down there," said Scrooge.



8.

"YOU are fooling," called back the boy. "No, no," said Scrooge. "I am in earnest. I will give you fifty cents if you get it for me."

The boy was off like a shot for the turkey, and in a short time was back with the very biggest turkey you ever saw.

"Take it to Bob Cratchet's," whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands and laughing. "He shan't know who sent it. It is twice the size of Tiny Tim."

The boy took the turkey and off he started for Bob's. Scrooge dressed himself all in his best and went to church and walked about the streets and watched the people. He patted the little children on the head as he passed, and wished every one a merry Christmas. He raised Bob Cratchet's salary, and gave many presents, and promised many more.

He never saw the spirit again, but he lived a happy, useful life thereafter, and it was always said of him that he knew how to keep Christmas well. May that be truly said of all of us, and so, as Tiny Tim said, God bless us every one!