

Storytime with Dad

A Christmas Carol

Welcome to Storytime with Dad. Today we will be reading A Christmas Carol.

Ebenezer Scrooge was a greedy, nasty old man! He was as tough as a rock, and so cold inside his face appeared frozen. Scrooge did not take care of anyone and rarely anybody cared for him. Even Christmas cheer couldn't unfreeze his frozen heart.

On Christmas Eve, he was busy in his counting house. He had left his office door wide open, to have an eye on his clerk, Bob Cratchit.

'A very Merry Christmas', greeted two gentlemen who arrived, collecting for the poor. "Are there no prisons for these people?" asked Scrooge. "No workhouses? I pay for those. That's more than enough." The men went out into the bitterly cold afternoon, shaking their heads.

A little while later, a scruffy boy paused by Scrooge's workplace and began to sing. God bless you, merry christmas... But one look at Scrooge and he fled without completing the verse.

Finally, it was time to go home. "You'll want the entire day off tomorrow, I suppose?" Scrooge snapped at Bob.

"If it's convenient," said Bob.

"It isn't very. Be here early the next day."

Scrooge left the office with a roar. Bob quickly locked up and set off for home. Scrooge went for his regular lonely dinner in a lonely hotel. Then he too set off for home, a few gloomy rooms in an old house.

There was a knock at the door, then slowly and gradually, something came *through* the door. Scrooge could hardly believe it!

"Why don't you believe your eyes?" asked the ghost.

"Are you my old friend Marley's Ghost?" questioned Scrooge. The ghost let out a scary cry and rattled its chains.

"Mercy!" cried Scrooge. "Why do you trouble me?" Again, the ghost shook its chains. "And why are you chained up?" Scrooge added.

"These chains are a penalties for my self centered life," said the ghost. "There are some waiting for you, too, and getting heavier."

"But you were good at business", said Scrooge.

"I should have been taking care of others. I've come here tonight to alert you," said the ghost.

"You might avoid my fate. You will be haunted by three spirits, and expect the first spirit when clock chimes one" the ghost went on and walked out the window.

Scrooge closed the window and checked his door locks. Then he fell into bed and was asleep instantly. The words of ghost stuck in his mind.

Scrooge awoke in total darkness. To his shock, a clock chimed one. On the stroke of one, a hand pulled back the curtain around his bed.

Scrooge gasped. He was one on one with the strangest creature he had ever seen. "Are you the spirit I was told about?" he asked.

"I am!" said the ghost, gently. "I'm the Ghost of Christmas Past. Your past. Rise and walk with me."

The ghost had taken him to his old school room in which a lonely boy sat, all alone. "I wish I had given the carol boy something" he imagined.

Then they were back in a busy street and entering a warehouse, where a party was in full swing. "And here I was an apprentice!" cried Scrooge. "There's my master, old Fezziwig. He made us so happy..." "Why didn't... Why didn't I wish Bob, Happy Christmas"? He asked himself.

The party faded, leaving behind Scrooge and the spirit outside.

There was the young Scrooge again, seated next to a lovely girl. "I cannot marry you, " she said, regretfully. "You love money more than you love me. "

The scene changed and there was clearly his old love, now committed to another man.

"Spirit remove me, I cannot tolerate it anymore" Cried the Scrooge. "This is exactly what happened. Do not blame me" said the ghost.

Scrooge started to struggle with the ghost. The spirit sank down and Scrooge sank into a deep sleep.

Again Scrooge got up, back in bed, as a clock struck two, he got up and went into the next room. He could hardly identify it. And right in the middle sat the second spirit. "Come in and know me far better! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present."

Scrooge accompanied the ghost, through streets full of people preparing for Christmas time. Finally, they reached Bob Cratchit's house, where Mrs. Cratchit was getting the Christmas dinner ready. Soon, everybody was enjoying the feast. It was a little meal for such a large family but no one would have dreamed of saying so.

"A Cheerful Christmas to all of us! God bless us, every one!" said Cratchit's tiny little son Tim.

By now, it was absolutely getting dark. The ghost led Scrooge back outside into the busy streets. They flew to quieter, emptier places... but everywhere Scrooge saw people filled with Christmas energy.

In the middle of the gloom, Scrooge observed a hearty laugh. It was his nephew Fred. They had arrived in the middle of Fred's Christmas dinner party. They were all enjoying the Christmas night.

Already the clock was chiming three quarters past eleven. "But is some thing hidden your robes?" said Scrooge, "Look, " the ghost replied, revealing two unhappy children. "The boy is Lack of Education, the girl is Want. Beware of them both, but especially the boy! "

"Have they no place to go?" asked Scrooge. "Are there no prisons? No workhouses?" the spirit responded, using Scrooge's own words and phrases. The clock struck twelve and the spirit disappeared. As the last chime died away, Scrooge found a hooded phantom approaching nearer.

The phantom floated quietly up to Scrooge. "Are you the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?" he questioned. The phantom said absolutely nothing, but directed its ghostly hand. "Ghost of the future," cried Scrooge, "I fear you a lot more than any other, but I shall go with you."

They left the crowds and visited a part of town Scrooge had never visited. As they entered a junk store, three people came in with items to sell.

Scrooge was horrified. These things had been stolen from a dead man's home. "Spirit, I see!" he cried. "This poor man might be me."

As he spoke, the picture switched. Now, they were in a bedroom. A dead man lay on the bed, alone but for a cat and some rats. The phantom pointed towards the man's face, but Scrooge could not take a look. "Is nobody moved by this man's death?" he begged.

The phantom spread out his dark robe for a second. When he drew it back again, Scrooge saw a room where a man and wife were discussing. "We owe him so much money," the lady said. "It would take a miracle to soften his heart."

"It's past softening," replied her husband, cheerfully. "He's dead!"

"But they are happy!" said Scrooge. "Let me see some sadness for a demise, a soul, please." The phantom took him to the Cratchits' house. Mrs. Cratchit and her kids were by the fire. An air of unhappiness hung over them.

"Answer me one question, then," asked Scrooge. "Have I seen what will happen or exactly what might happen?" Still the ghost stayed silent.

Trembling all over, Scrooge crept up to the gravestone and read the name upon it.

With a terrible cry, Scrooge grabbed the ghost's robe. "No, spirit. Not again!" But the phantom simply pointed to Scrooge and back to the grave. "I'm not the person I was," Scrooge cried. "Let me change."

Scrooge closed his eyes to pray. When he opened them once again, the phantom had become his bedpost.

He was back in his very own bed. "Ha! " he laughed. "I'm as light as a feather, as happy as a school child. Thank you, Marley! From now on, I will keep Christmas in my heart throughout the year." He never saw the spirits again but it was always said of him that he understood how to have a jolly Christmas. May that be true of all of us. Merry Christmas and God bless us, everyone!

The end.



This story is one of Charles Dickens classics, published in 1843. The words he used were a bit more old timey than the ones I used in this version, but the story itself remains the same. Scrooge is a wicked old man with no love in his heart. And by the end of the story, he learns that the most important thing in life is not money, it's our ability to show love to one another. When he saw the future, he realized that nobody would miss him when he was gone, and that it may have actually been a very happy time for some people - the Cratchit's in fact. The person he knew the best, would be happy that he was gone.

That moment would not make any of us feel good about ourselves. So this Christmas season, I hope you will do something good for someone else, and show them some love and kindness. No matter who they are, what they believe, what they look like, or even if they are as mean as Ebenezer Scrooge was! Probably, especially if they are as mean as Scrooge was - I hope you'll still show them some love. The ability to show love says more about you as the giver, than it does about the person receiving it. Showing love to each other is how we can make this world a better place for everyone. And that's something worth doing.

On that note, I wish you all a Merry Christmas if you celebrate it. If not, that's OK, the story still has a good message and I wish you a very happy New Year and whatever holiday you celebrate as well. I hope each of you will drop me an email at hello@storytimewithdad.com or on Instagram at [storytimewithdadpod](https://www.instagram.com/storytimewithdadpod) and let me know what you've been up to recently! If you have a story request, let me know that too.

Thank you for listening! I'll see you again next time.

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