



# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By Charles Dickens

*Reading and listening. Reading and listening. Nothing pays greater dividends in the long term than reading and listening. And Charles Dickens's most famous short novel, "A Christmas Carol", is a perfect way to start.*

*Richard Vaughan.*



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**Narrator:** Marley was dead. There is no doubt about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman (*cura*), the **clerk**<sup>1</sup> (*contable*), the undertaker (*director de la funeraria*), and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it.

Scrooge and he were partners (*socios*) for many years. Scrooge was his sole (*único*) executor (*albacea*), his sole administrator, his sole friend, and sole mourner (*doliente*).

Oh! But Scrooge was tight-fisted, (*tacaño*) secret, and solitary as an oyster (*ostra*). Nobody ever stopped him on the street to say, “My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?” No beggars (*mendigos*) asked him for money. No children asked him what time it was. No man or woman ever once in his life inquired the way to such and such (*tal o cual*) a place. No-one asked Scrooge for anything.

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very (*preciso*) thing he liked, to keep all human sympathy at a distance.

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy at his counting-house (*contaduría*). It was cold, bleak (*crudo/gris*), biting (*cortante*) weather. The city clocks had only just gone (*dar la hora*) three, but it was quite dark already. It had not been light all day. Candles were burning in the windows of the neighbouring offices. The fog was so dense outside that the houses opposite were mere phantoms.

The door of Scrooge’s counting-house was open so that he might keep his eye (*vigilar*) upon his clerk. The clerk sat in a dismal (*sombrío*) little room copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one piece of coal. Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room.

**Nephew:** A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

**Narrator:** cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge’s nephew.

**Scrooge:** Bah! Humbug (*paparruchas*)!

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<sup>1</sup> Hay dos pronunciaciones estándar de la palabra clerk. Ambas pronunciaciones están incluidas en esta primera sección del Narrador. La pronunciación utilizada en este primer párrafo es la estándar en el Reino Unido. Más adelante en el texto, la pronunciación es la estándar en Estados Unidos





***Narrator:** Scrooge's nephew, Fred, had been walking rapidly in the fog and frost (escarcha). His face was glowing (radiante). His eyes sparkled (brillar).*



2

**Nephew:** Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean (*decir en serio*) that, I am sure?

**Scrooge:** I do mean it. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

**Nephew:** Come, then. What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be miserable (*abatido/deprimido*)? You're rich enough.

**Scrooge:** Bah!

**Nephew:** Don't be cross (*enfadado*), uncle!

**Scrooge:** Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills (*facturas*) without money, a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer, a time for balancing your books (*hacer cuadrar las cuentas*).

**Nephew:** Uncle!

**Scrooge:** Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

**Nephew:** Keep it! But you don't keep it.

**Scrooge:** Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!

**Nephew:** I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time, a kind, forgiving (*indulgente, permisivo*), charitable, pleasant time. It's the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women open their hearts freely. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap (*pequeña cantidad*) of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!

***Narrator:** The clerk involuntarily applauded.*

**Scrooge:** Let me hear another sound from *you*, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your position!

**Nephew:** Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow.

**Scrooge:** NO!

**Nephew:** But why? Why?





**Scrooge:** Why did you get married?

**Nephew:** Because I fell in love.

**Scrooge:** Because you fell in love! Good afternoon!

**Nephew:** But uncle, you never came to see me before I got married. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

**Scrooge:** Good afternoon.

**Nephew:** I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?

**Scrooge:** Good afternoon.

**Nephew:** I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute (*empecinado*). But I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle! And A Happy New Year!

**Scrooge:** Good afternoon!

*Narrator:* His nephew left the room. He stopped at the door to wish a Merry Christmas to the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge, for he returned the Christmas greetings cordially.

**Scrooge:** There's another fellow. My clerk, with fifteen shillings (*chelines*) a week, and a wife and family, talking about a Merry Christmas.

*Narrator:* As the clerk let Scrooge's nephew out (*acompañar a la puerta*), he let two other people in (*recibir/invitar a pasar*).



3

**First Visitor:** Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing (*dirigirse a*) Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

**Scrooge:** Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago, this very (*misma*) night.

**First Visitor:** At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute (*indigentes*), who suffer greatly at the present time.

**Second Visitor:** Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

**Scrooge:** Are there no prisons?





**Second Visitor:** Plenty of prisons.

**Scrooge:** And the **workhouses**?<sup>2</sup> Are they still in operation?

**Second Visitor:** They are. Still. I wish I could say they were not.

**Scrooge:** The **Treadmill**<sup>3</sup> (*molino disciplinario inglés*) and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?

**Second Visitor:** Both very busy, sir.

**Scrooge:** Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them. I'm very glad to hear it.

**Second Visitor:** A few of us are trying to raise funds to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want (*la necesidad*) is keenly (*profundamente*) felt (*sentir*), and Abundance rejoices (*regocijar*). What shall I put you down (*apuntar*) for.

**Scrooge:** Nothing!

**First Visitor:** You wish to be anonymous?

**Scrooge:** I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the prisons and workhouses—they cost enough; and those who are badly off (*estar en malas condiciones*) must go there.

**First Visitor:** Many can't go there, and many would rather die.

**Scrooge:** If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus (*excedente/sobrante*) population. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. My business occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!

*Narrator: Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen left.*

*Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened (espesarse) and the cold became intense. At length (finalmente) the hour of closing the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will (mala gana) Scrooge got off (bajarse) his stool. The clerk put on his hat.*

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2 Asilos para pobres donde daban comida y alojamiento a cambio de trabajar.

3 En el siglo XIX, un tipo de molino utilizado para realizar trabajos forzados en las prisiones británicas.





**Scrooge:** You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?

**Bob Cratchit:** If convenient, sir.

**Scrooge:** It's not convenient and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown (*media corona*) for it, you'd think yourself ill-used (*maltratado*). And yet you don't think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

**Bob Cratchit:** It is only once a year, sir.

**Scrooge:** A poor excuse for picking (*robar*) a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier (*más temprano aún*) next morning.

**Narrator:** *The clerk promised that he would, and Scrooge walked out with a growl (gruñido). He took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern and, having read all the newspapers and studied his banker's book, he went home to bed. He lived in a gloomy (lúgubre) suite of rooms. The house was old and dreary (lóbrega, deprimente), for nobody lived in it except Scrooge. The other rooms were all let out (alquilar) as offices. The fog and frost hung about (rodear) the black old gateway (verja) of the house.*

*Now, it is a fact that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker (aldaba/llamador) on the door, except that it was very large. It is a fact that Scrooge had seen it, every night and every morning, for many years. It is also a fact that Scrooge had as little imagination as any man in the city of London. Yet on that Christmas Eve (Nochebuena), Scrooge saw not a knocker, but Marley's face.*

*Marley's face. It had a dismal light about it. The eyes were wide open (como platos/muy abiertos) and were perfectly motionless (inmóvil). As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again. To say that he was not troubled (azorado/turbado) would be untrue (mentira).*

*He took out the key, turned it, walked in, and lighted his candle. Up Scrooge went. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. Before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that everything was all right. His memory of the face on the knocker made him want to do that.*

*Quite satisfied, he closed his door and locked himself in (encerrarse). Secured against surprise, he put on his dressing-gown (camisón), slippers (zapatillas) and nightcap (gorro de dormir), and sat down before the fire to take his gruel (gachas).*





In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley!

